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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 633. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 16TH, 1901. [ONE PENNY.

A Good Appetite; Enjoyment in Eating.

What is Appetite after all? Really a sensation of hunger caused by a craving of the digestive organs for work to do. Nature provides this craving for food so that the Body shall be well nourished. Hence it follows that a sharp Appetite is a good and natural thing to have. No one need be ashamed of it. And what after all is enjoyment of food—the so-called indulgence in the pleasures of the table—but proper and efficient Digestion of Food?—in moderation of course. If you do not digest what you eat, you certainly do not enjoy it. Quite otherwise; you are subject to pains, aches, stuffiness, Nerve Depression, and a host of minor ailments which quite destroy enjoyment. You may even fear and loathe food, and dread having to eat at all. But what can you do? You must eat, for you cannot let yourself starve. Approach the subject from another point of view. Consider how food is digested, how it is absorbed, how it enriches the Blood, and how finally it is transformed into vitality, vigour, health and strength, to replace the waste of hourly decay. Realise at once that you can facilitate, promote, and make easy all these processes, and that you can do it simply, cheaply, and efficiently by the use of

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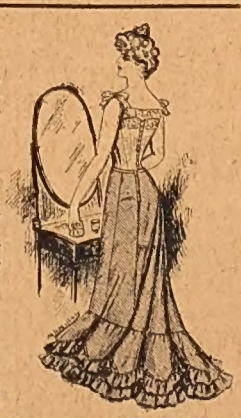

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SHORT STORIES.

No. 633.] For the Week Ending February 16th, 1901. [ONE PENNY.

THE WEIRD CASE OF OLD BAVIDGE.

By W. DELISLE HAY.

As a young man I entered the office of Bavidge and Co., merchants, trading with the East, chiefly with Singapore and Penang. I have used the plural, but in reality the firm consisted solely of one—old Bavidge, as we clerks called him. There never had been any other members of the firm. Old Bavidge had worked his way up from what he was accustomed to call "the bottom rung of the ladder." When he first set up in business on his own account, as a commission agent, he had styled himself Bavidge and Co., and so he had continued to do after he prospered and became a merchant on a larger scale.

There were four of us in the office, and sometimes one or two more, when a press of business made it necessary. But we were merely clerks and no more. Old Bavidge liked to keep things in his own hands, and make confidants of no one. His clerks had no responsibility, and were not trusted with any knowledge of the conduct of affairs. In point of fact we were one and all little more than old Bavidge's writing and cyphering machines. The result of this was that we had no chance of rising in the office beyond a not very exalted point. Few clerks stayed more than a year or two, therefore.

Now I remained with Bavidge for more than six years, and the reason for that will presently appear. I was nominally head-clerk at the end of that period, but my salary was not much more than it had been at first, and though I necessarily learnt a good deal of the nature of my employer's transactions, yet he never took me into his confidence or talked to me of the prospects of concerns in which he was engaged.

Old Bavidge lived at Clapham, in a very nice house of the villa species. He was a confirmed old bachelor, but had long ago taken to live with him a widowed sister and her young daughter Emmeline. The latter he doted on.

Even when a little thing she was the queen of his household and the light of his life. As she grew up the best governesses and masters were engaged to educate her, and finally she spent two years at a finishing school near her home.

Our employer was often in the habit of inviting one or other of his clerks out to Clapham. He was a kindly man and liked to exercise hospitality towards his *employés*. These visits were great events in the eyes of his clerks.

They fared sumptuously, were kindly treated, and invariably fell incontinently in love with pretty little Emmeline. Need I say I followed the example of my predecessors and companions in this last respect?

Indeed, I soon adored my employer's niece, and it was for the sake of sometimes seeing her that I remained on in his service, and rejected various opportunities of getting into a more prospectively promising berth.

Latterly I had risen in favour, chiefly because Bavidge had taken up an enthusiasm for his garden and hothouses, and I had in early years imbibed a good deal of horticultural knowledge.

He, who knew nothing of the art, was glad to find in me someone to talk to about it and advise him. So I became a very frequent visitor at Clapham, and often enough I was asked out on Saturday afternoon to stay over till Monday.

At the time when I had been six years in the office, Emmeline had left school for good and had "come out"—whatever that may mean. My passion for her was becoming serious, and she was so kind to me, and so intimate with me, that I had much ado to refrain from declaring myself.

I knew too well that to do that would but lead to my dismissal from the house. Bavidge was not likely to encourage a suitor who was merely his clerk, and whose means consisted solely of £120 a year, paid monthly. But I was young and would not despair.

It was about this time that an event happened which, looking back by the light of later experience, my memory reverts to, as the first link in the chain of evil, of which I have yet to tell.

One day, I had been out for an hour or two during business hours, and on returning to the office was jocularly condoled with by my fellow-clerks.

"You've missed something," they said. "We've just had a real 'Penang lawyer' in the office."

It turned out that a Malay, wearing his native dress, had called upon our employer. He spoke English well, my fellow clerks said. He had sent in a neat, glazed card bearing the name of Zamat Driss, and had mentioned that he had just arrived from Penang.

To add to the singularity of this visit, it appeared that old Bavidge had been heard to speak in high and angry tones to the stranger at first, though what he said was inaudible through the closed doors. But he had soon quieted down, and after an interview lasting

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more than hour, he had gone out with the stranger, both apparently on the best of terms.

We did not see the Malay—if such he were—in the office again; but I have reason to think our employer met him elsewhere subsequently.

A few days later, I casually remarked on the Oriental's visit.

"To be sure," said old Bavidge, "a most worthy man; a merchant at Penang. Not a little curious," he went on musingly, "not a little curious I should have been doing business with his firm for more than thirty years, and this is the first time I've met one of them face to face." Presently he added: "There's a pretty general belief in the craft and guile of these Orientals, now, I've always found them keen traders, but thoroughly honest and trustworthy. Thoroughly honest and trustworthy," he repeated. "I'd rather deal with a Malay than with either a Greek, a Jew, or a Yankee any day."

But he gave me no information concerning Mr. Zamat Driss, or of the purport of that individual's visit, either then or at any other time.

As the weeks and months went by after this, I began to notice a change coming over old Bavidge. He was fidgety and restless, contrary to his ordinary character; he betrayed great anxiety on the arrival of each mail from the Straits Settlements; he had the air of a man who has some great weight on his mind.

He lost interest in horticulture.

If I had not known him to be an ultra-cautious trader, always averse to rash speculation, I should have supposed that he had risked his all upon some great transaction.

One night I had been dining at Clapham, as was frequent, and the old merchant and I were sitting alone together over some choice port which he had recently added to his cellar.

We were aroused by the sound of carriage wheels, and then by a commotion at the front door.

I think he must have drunk a little more than usual, at any rate he became mellower than I had ever seen him, and let me into his mind perhaps more thoroughly than he intended. It began by his saying, in answer to some remarks of mine:

"Well, no, I don't feel the same interest in the garden just now. The truth is, I've other things to think about."

Then he rambled on, talking more to himself than to me.

"Besides, what's the use? I don't think we shall be here another year. I'll buy a nice place of my own, for Emmeline; I'll settle it on her; somewhere—a little further out of town, perhaps. I shall be in a very different position after—hum!"

And here he ruminated for a moment.

"I don't see why I shouldn't be elected alderman. Greenway says I might, even now. And—and—by-and-bye possibly the chair. Why not? Emmeline would be Lady Mayoress then, of course. Ha, ha! Bless her heart! We'd have to get her a husband—a nobleman—who knows?"

But here some uneasy movement of mine disturbed the current of his thoughts. He looked at me and awoke from his reverie.

"There, get along to the drawing-room, lad. I think I must have a little nap after that wine. Yes, yes, and you shan't suffer for sticking to me; there'll be a rise for you in my office yet, perhaps. We shall see before long."

About a month after the conversation recorded above, there was a great banquet at the Guildhall, given by the Lord Mayor and Corporation to some illustrious personages from abroad.

I don't know how he managed it, but old Bavidge in his usual pushing way contrived to get himself numbered among the guests. Business was concluded at the office in the usual way on the appointed evening; after that, old Bavidge dressed there and went off to the Guildhall.

He locked up the safes in his private room before going, put the keys in his pocket as he was accustomed to do, and bade me go out to Clapham for the evening, if I liked, to amuse his sister and niece in his absence.

Between nine and ten o'clock that evening I was sitting in the Clapham drawing-room playing, or making believe to play, a most delicious game of bezique with sweet Emmeline, while her mother tranquilly dozed in her arm-chair by the fire. From this blissful condition of peace and quiet we were aroused by the sound of carriage-wheels grinding on the gravelled approach outside, and then by a commotion at the front door.

We rushed out to see what was the matter, and then all became confusion, dismay, wailing of women and helpless wringing of hands.

Poor old Bavidge was borne in, speechless, inert, scarcely conscious; amid the loud lamentations of terrified women he was taken upstairs and laid on his bed, while somebody ran for the nearest doctor.

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I also took upon myself to send off, post-haste, for a physician of eminence.

When the local practitioner came, he first talked of apoplexy, the shook his head gravely over the patient, and then set about such restorative measures, as suggested themselves to his experience.

From a City friend, who had kindly accompanied my employer from the Guildhall, I gleaned all that could then be ascertained of the circumstances attending this sad affair.

While the guests were assembling at the Guildhall, old Bavidge had been seen wandering about the library, museum, and other chambers, talking to various acquaintances. He was then apparently in the best of health and spirits.

At the banquet my informant had sat next to him, and on his other side was a foreigner, of whom many were present. This was an Oriental, the gentleman stated, one of the suite of some Indian rajah, he thought; at any rate old Bavidge seemed to know him, for they talked together a good deal.

Half-way through the dinner my employer had begun to complain of not feeling well; his indisposition rapidly increased, and just before the speech-making began he turned quite white and feeble, while the sweat stood in beads upon his forehead.

Apparently finding it hopeless to struggle any longer against the fain ness that was overpowering him, old Bavidge now made an effort to withdraw from the hall quietly, while he could do so without attracting attention.

He seemed so feeble and tottering that my informant was quite concerned, and gave him his arm, while the Oriental also assisted him on the other side; they got him out into the waiting-room, and then the gentleman went to look for Bavidge's carriage, leaving then the Oriental with my employer.

He was some minutes away, and when he returned Bavidge was much worse; he could no longer speak, or even stand; they had to get the help of some waiters to lift him into the carriage. The foreigner's attentions were given in the kindest possible way; but my informant would not hear of his leaving the Guildhall, as he offered to do, and himself got into a carriage and brought my poor employer home.

The eminent physician I had sent for shortly made his appearance. As soon as he saw the patient he intimated to me that death was at hand. Then a short colloquy was held by the two doctors apart. I ove heard a word or two of their consultation, as it happened. The local practitioner seemed to be urging something, which the other pooh-poohed.

"Preposterous, my dear sir," I heard him say. "At a Guildhall banquet! Nonsense! No, no, one of those cases of obscure cardiac disease, ending in sudden and unexpected syncope. The case is plain to me."

The local doctor relinquished his opinion, whatever it was, and bowed to that of the great man. A sudden weakening of the heart's action was, they told me, the cause of old Bavidge's prostration. There was probably some unsuspected organic disease, and this, acted on by the excitement of the banquet, had resulted in syncope.

Meanwhile the patient lay white and motionless upon his bed, scarcely breathing. Towards midnight he opened his eyes and looked at us. He gazed at Emmeline and her mother as they knelt sobbing by the bedside, then at me, the doctors, and his friend, who still remained. He seemed to make great efforts to raise his left hand, but could not succeed in doing so, and kept looking at it and then at us.

"Curious," said the gentleman who brought him home, "he kept doing that in the carriage."

The physician lifted the hand and looked at it. A slight recent cut or scratch was perceptible on the ball of the thumb.

He seemed to make great efforts to raise his left hand.

"That's it," said the great man. "His weakening faculties are fixed upon this little cut, you see. Likely he caught his hand on something just before the seizure, perhaps even in the carriage."

And then old Bavidge gasped and gasped as if he tried to speak but could not. And finally he looked wistfully and yearningly at Emmeline and then at me. And a half-whisper gurgled from his stiff lips. I thought he said: "Take care of——"

But then the spirit fled, and left me for ever uncertain whether he meant to warn, or wished to give his dear one into my charge.

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The funeral took place a day or two later, and then the will was read. Except a few legacies, including a year's salary to each of his clerks, the testator bequeathed all he died possessed of to Emmeline.

The trustees, two City friends of Bavidge's, appointed an accountant to wind up the dead man's affairs, and asked me to remain at the office and help him for the present.

The day after my employer's death, I had gone to the office to inform the other clerks. I was rather surprised to find my poor old Bavidge's keys upon the table in his private room. But everything appeared to be locked up and undisturbed.

Still the forgetfulness was unlike the man, and I took it as indicating the beginning of his seizure.

Yet there was something mysterious about it, for I fancied recollecting his taking those keys away with him, and he certainly had not returned to the office before the seizure overtook him.

The housekeeper whom I questioned on this head—our office was a set of chambers in a large building—had not seen or heard anyone come in after we left.

She fancied someone had come in late at night, because in the morning she had seen muddy footmarks on the stairs she had cleaned the night before.

But there were many offices in the building, and nothing to indicate which of them the person had gone to, if any such had indeed entered at all. It must have been somebody belonging to the place, at any rate, or he would not have had a latch-key for the outer door. The matter did not rest in my mind just then.

When the accountant and I came to look into affairs, we found the business extremely compact and simple, and the records thoroughly posted.

It seemed that when all goods and securities were realised, there would be some £80,000 at least for Emmeline.

This was our first impression, but it quickly appeared we were premature in accepting it.

We received intimation of a large credit given to "Bavidge and Co." by a bank; then another similar claim was heard of, and then various unaccountable acceptances began to crop up. It appeared that large transactions in the East were still in progress.

The odd thing was that no reference to these matters appeared in any of the books. All I had had any knowledge of was straightforward and easily understood, but these latter affairs were a puzzle indeed.

Only one unheeded scrap of paper thrust away in a corner threw any light upon them. There seemed to have been a memorandum upon it, pencilled by my late employer.

There was a column of figures with dates and initials opposite them. We gathered eventually that it was a rough list of bills and acceptances now falling due; but it did not enlighten us, except as to the total amount, which was startling.

The paper appeared to have been used as a wrapper for others, as on the back of it appeared the indorsement—"Vouchers of Z.D. and others."

Of course, we made diligent search in every possible place for papers relating to these matters. We found none; but we discovered that certain pages had been extracted from Bavidge's private books; that receptacles wherein I knew he kept invoices, vouchers, and such-like documents, were wholly or partially empty, and that a small journal he used to carry always about with him was missing.

We could only conclude that everything relating to the operations he had recently embarked in had for some reason been carefully destroyed or secreted.

Of course inquires were made on our behalf at Singapore and Penang. After long waiting we learnt that these would be practically fruitless, unless we could produce the missing accounts of the transactions.

The firms which had been authorised to draw upon Bavidge had supplied goods to persons acting as his agents. These, again, had transferred value to others.

Since the transactions were numerous, generally petty in detail, and passed through many hands, it would be an arduous task to follow any of them up without any record of them in hand to guide us.

Moreover we had nothing to show to make good our claims, and were consequently not in a position to force information from naturally unwilling people.

For example, there was a native firm at Singapore, composed of Chinese and Malays which, had agents in every Eastern port.

Such of the transactions as were traceable appeared to have ended with these people.

But they blandly declined to discuss matters which, they said, referred to business concluded and done with. If we, the representatives of "Bavidge and Co.," had any claims to make upon them, these must be brought forward through the usual channels.

This firm, our English correspondents in Singapore informed us, was one of long standing and repute. There had been rumours it was shaky some months before, but it had recently recovered ground and enlarged its operations.

To make an end of this part of my story, it was plain that old Bavidge's money had flown away to the East. When, some months later, all the claims we had knowledge of were made good, and coming through London banks there was no way of evading them, the trustees considered themselves justified in winding up affairs and making a settlement. Nearly all the property old Bavidge had possessed was required to liquidate the credits he had received. A mere pittance remained for Emmeline and her mother. They had to give up the villa at Clapham, sell the furniture, and go into furnished lodgings.

It was a sore trial, but the two poor things bore up bravely. Under the sad circumstances I had ventured to speak to Emmeline, and we were now formally engaged. But I had lost my situation, of course, and the new one I presently got did not seem to justify me in pressing my dear girl for our immediate union. We saw that we must wait awhile.

One day I was pacing up and down the great hall of the Guildhall, brooding over past events. Suddenly I was tapped on the arm and accosted by a stranger. He wished to put some trivial questions relating to the place we were in.

Looking at him, I saw the man dressed in the semi-nautical costume of a ship's captain or mate when ashore. He was of very dark complexion, with black hair and eyes, and he wore rings in his ears. He spoke English fluently, and talked like a well-educated person, but he was evidently a foreigner.

I was able to give him the information he desired, which related to the history of the Guildhall, and we dropped into conversation on antiquarian topics, the stranger evincing no mean acquaintance with the subject. This led to our presently wandering off to the museum, to look at some of the Roman relics placed there.

Now my mind was continually running upon the memorandum marked "Vouchers of Z. D." which I

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referred to a Malay who, it will be remembered, had once called at the office some months before old Bavidge died, and whose name was Zamat Driss.

It was my private opinion that this person could give, if he choose, much information towards clearing up the mystery of old Bavidge's affairs. But all inquiry had failed to elicit anything with regard to him. And then there was the Oriental who had sat by Bavidge's side at the banquet. Could he be identical with Zamat Driss? Nothing more had been heard of him.

As my new acquaintance and I were ascending the stairs leading to the museum, it occurred to me that he was too dark to be the Portuguese I had hitherto fancied him.

It now struck me he might be an Oriental, and, as courteously as I could, I asked if such were the case. He replied indifferently that he came from Singapore. Here was a discovery. In a moment impulse prompted me to ask if he had ever met one Zamat Driss there.

The first effect of my questioning was not a little surprising, though I did not at the moment see any significance in it. He staggered as if I had struck him, and a singular expression came into his dark eyes, a stealthy feline expression, if I can make myself understood by so describing it. But in a moment this had passed. He smiled and said:

"Perhaps you are not aware, that the names you mention are nearly as common among Malays as John Smith among yourselves? I have known several men called Zamat Driss. If you can tell me more about your man, perhaps I could help you. Where did you know him? And why do you ask about him?"

I mentioned that the man I sought had done business with my late employer, Mr. Bavidge, and that there were circumstances making it desirable he should be found. Then it was the stranger's turn to ask questions. He seemed unaccountably interested—excited I might say—by what I said. His eyes gleamed and sparkled like a snake's, but his manner was so composed, his politeness so excessive, that I answered him with incautious freedom.

But presently he told me he could not recollect any person answering to the one I was in search of. I had been led on to talk so much that I now felt greatly disappointed. I would have left him, only he seemed so sorry not to be able to help me, and so voluble in leading conversation into other channels that I was induced to linger with him.

We were now in the museum of the Guildhall, looking at and soon chatting about the various antiquities stored there. By-and-bye we came to a rather dark corner where was nothing very interesting, but my companion seemed especially drawn that way; and presently, behind a pile of broken sculptures, he pointed out to me some objects I should not otherwise have noticed.

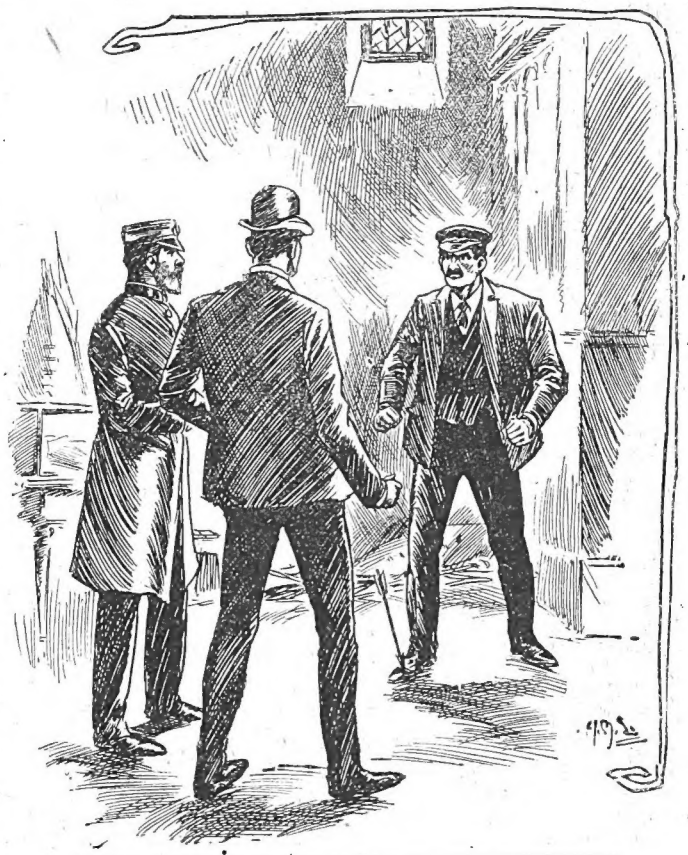
These appeared to be a bundle of bows and arrows and other weapons, covered with dust, and, to all appearance, shoved away there and forgotten.

He took up one of the arrows which lay a little apart from the rest and examined it.

"This," he said, "is of modern make. Rather out of place here, isn't it? I fancy it comes from some island of the Asiatic Archipelago. I've seen the like at home."

He went on to descant about the making of these weapons by savage tribes in an easy way, but with so much detail that it interested me. He told me of the rough tools employed and bid me observe, nevertheless, how beautiful was the finish attained.

That I might the better see the perfection of the point and barb he laid that in my hand, he continuing to loosely hold the shaft attached. At the moment the point of the weapon lay in my palm I noticed his hand



For just a second he glared at me and at the attendant with a tigerish look.

shake a little. Fearful of receiving an accidental dig, I hastily slipped my hand from under the point, looking innocently up at him as I did so. What I saw in his face was—well, if never before or since my eyes met those of a murderer, they did so then. Though far from thinking that at the moment, I yet started violently with a sudden, indefinable fear. My start was accelerated by an official voice near by, saying:

"You must please not to touch the things, gentlemen."

It was an attendant whom I had not previously noticed who spoke and now came up to us. His voice, together with my start, so affected the dark stranger that he let the arrow slip from his hand. It fell point downwards upon his foot. For just a second he had

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glared at me and at the attendant with such a tigerish look that I instinctively stepped back.

Then he stooped and began to examine his foot, and I saw that the arrow had slightly pricked him, having passed through the thin cloth "upper" of the boot he was wearing.

He handled the place with far more attention than such a trifle seemed to warrant. When he rose there was a new expression on his face, one that it was easy even for me to understand—an expression of intense, livid terror. Hoarsely he murmured:

"I am hurt, I am hurt! I must go! Ah, it is Fate! Fate!"

He spoke again in what was, I suppose, his own tongue, and, wringing his hands with a gesture of frantic despair, glided past, rapidly and disappeared from the room.

I was about to run after him when the voice of the other spectator stopped me.

"Well, I never!" he exclaimed, picking up the arrow and restoring it to its place. "These Indian chaps make a deal of nothing. As if a mere scratch could signify."

Then a sudden idea shot into my mind which caused me a thrill of sickening horror. What if the arrows were poisoned.

I had read that savages in many parts of the world were in the habit of putting poison on the points of such weapons. What if the stranger knew the fact! What if——

As soon as my mind was clear enough I began to question the attendant. He told me the weapons had been temporarily deposited there some years before.

Apparently they had been forgotten. Poisoned! He had never heard tell, and didn't believe in such things. At any rate he didn't believe poison on an arrow would keep active for years. Very few people seemed ever to discover these weapons or notice them because they were laid almost out of sight.

The last time he had seen anyone look at them was long since. There was a banquet at the Guildhall so he remembered the occasion. Some persons came into the museum before the dinner and he remembered there was an Indian rajah or Siamese prince, or something of that sort, as he judged from his dress, among them. This man was looking at the arrows with another, an Englishman. He did not remember what the Englishman was like. And that was all he knew or could recollect.

My thoughts were so tumultuous and my head swam so with the real or fancied discoveries I believed I had made that I could only go home to think. Next morning all was still confusion, but I had resolved to see the Clapham surgeon who had been summoned to old Bavidge's deathbed. With difficulty did I get him to listen to me. At last he got interested. He acknowledged that, when first called in, he had momentarily suspected some unnatural cause for the seizure certain symptoms being peculiar but the eminent physician had set his mind at rest on that point, referring everything to cardiac disease, and his authority on such points was almost absolute.

This doctor however was sufficiently interested to aid me in obtaining permission to examine the arrows. We tested them on rabbits and soon had clear evidence of their venomous and deadly character. A slight film of varnish-like matter was perceptible on the points. A clever analyst pronounced this to be of vegetable origin, but was wholly baffled in trying to ascertain what it was. It was akin to "woorari" he thought. After this discovery some effort was made to find out the depositor of the weapons, but all trace of him had disappeared, and it was surmised that he had either died or forgotten the matter.

The physician on being told what we knew and suspected, declined to alter his opinion that Bavidge had died from anything but heart-disease. The Clapham doctor half inclined to my opinion, but he pointed out to me that it would be impossible to prove it now. The poison was one of which no trace could be detected, because no tests for it were known. Exhumation of the body would, therefore, be futile. And even supposing that it was proved that old Bavidge had died because his hand had been pricked by a poisoned arrow, there was no evidence of crime. It might have been accident. No criminal could be named, no crime could be proved; just as the accountant had told me that no evidence of fraud really existed. A lawyer I consulted told me much the same thing.

And yet I have worked out a theory in my mind which I believe to be the truth. I think that a plot was formed in the East and that Bavidge was selected as the victim, probably because he was not only wealthy, but was also known to conduct his business in an unusually private manner. Zamat Driss, the Malay, came to England to execute the plans. First, old Bavidge was lured into some large undertaking. Most likely the enterprise was genuine and the securities given to him for advances also good, for he was not the man to be taken in by false representations.

But when he had embarked all his credit, in other words, his capital, then the conspirators sought to secure it to themselves.

Driss effected the murder of Bavidge at the Guildhall, by means of the poisoned arrows (which he may possibly have deposited there himself). How he did so I guessed from my own adventure.

It will be remembered that the Oriental stranger, doubtless Driss, who sat beside Bavidge at the banquet and left the table with him, was afterwards alone with the half-conscious sufferer for a few minutes. What more easy to pick his pockets of the keys and pocket-book?

During the night, probably disguised, he might have used the keys to let himself into the office to destroy every paper referring to his own securities. Hence his villainous associates would be enabled to retain Bavidge's property without anyone being the wiser.

Now I think that the fascination which causes a murderer to return to the scene of his crime brought this man again to the Guildhall. Fate, or the hand of God, led him to accost me. By accident he learnt from my words what doubtless led him to suppose I was on his track. He instantly conceived the idea of removing me by the same apparently accidental means he had used against my employer.

That the wretch went from the Guildhall to certain and immediate death, I know and his look and words now assure me that he also knew it. I never succeeded in tracing him, but I suspect it was his body that was picked up in the Thames a week later. The description I read of a "foreign seaman found drowned" sufficiently tallied with my recollection of the Malay. But the actual robbers, of whom he was but the active agent, are they never to be pursued and brought to justice?

I am only a poor clerk, though I am rich in dear Emmeline's love—who is now my wife—but the only thing I regret is that I have neither means, nor time, nor ability to hunt down the plunderers of old Bavidge, the associates of his assassin.

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A STORY FROM JAPAN.

In that low quarter of the city of Yedo, called Shinagawa, there lived a poor sandal-maker. He was very poor, and belonged to a proscribed tribe of Etas, a race which previous to the present era of refinement and enlightenment, lived by themselves, the spurned and despised of men; able to follow certain trades of a menial character, such as the flaying of animals, the execution of criminals, and the making of sandals and clogs, to which the free-born citizens would not stoop.

Poverty and misery preyed upon the mind of the poor sandal-maker so much that one night he said to his wife:

"O, Taki, I wish I could be a great lord for a few days, to do nothing, to eat and drink of the best, and never be obliged to think of spending a tempo."

"Don't be stupid, Denkichi," replied his wife, "you would never do to be a lord, you might just as well try to swallow Fuji" (the great mountain).

But the god Inari, who was prowling about as was his wont, heard this, and resolved that he would teach the poor man a lesson in contentment. So when the sandal-maker was asleep between his grimy quilts he appeared to him, and said:

"You want to be a lord. Very well, you shall try it for a week."

The sandal-maker rubbed his eyes and awoke. He was in a beautiful room, the walls of which were hung with curiously-painted scrolls; the mats were of the finest and whitest straw; his quilts were of the softest silk, and his pillow was of camphor wood with a roll of the best bamboo paper tied upon it.

As he awoke a servant approached him kneeling with a tray of sweetmeats. Denkichi took a handful and swallowed them, smacked his lips, and cleared the dish. The servant prostrated himself to the mats and retired, as he came, kneeling.

"Well," said Denkichi, "this is luck! I suppose I'd better dress."

His old garments were gone, and in their place was a suit of splendidly-embroidered silk, fitted with stiff cardboard wings, and adorned with huge white crests of oak leaves. A personage, who seemed to be a sort of major-domo, appeared, and informed him that the suitors were waiting in the ante-room.

"But where's O Taki?" asked Denkichi.

The man shook his head.

"Well, as I'm a regular lord," thought Denkichi, "I may as well see what it's like; but I should have liked O Taki to have seen me. And these clothes are confoundedly hot and heavy. But never mind, here goes."

So he went into the ante-room, where there must have been at least a hundred people assembled, who all made obeisance as he appeared.

The major-domo showed him a sort of raised daïs on which he was to seat himself, and for three long hours he was obliged to remain motionless, listening to claims and petitions, and remonstrances and beginnings of favours, and details of estates, and of revenue, and of a hundred other things about which he knew nothing.

Several times he felt as if he would have liked to jump up and stretch his legs, and hitched himself uneasily, but the eye of the major-domo spoke a silent remonstrance, and he subsided with a sigh.

When at length the business was concluded, Denkichi was about to fling off his robes, and lie down as was his wont, half-naked, with his pipe between his lips and a bowl of wine beside him, when the major-domo informed him that the hour of the midday meal had arrived. At this repast he was introduced to the ladies of his retinue, who were magnificently arrayed, but so staid and solemn of demeanour, so unable to appreciate the jokes by which he had won for himself the name of the "Shinagawa Wit" that he would much rather have had his plain, homely O Taki by his side.

The meal was splendid, but Denkichi would have preferred a dish of stewed eels, a bowl of Yakidofu, and a measure of Three Virtue wine, to all the delicate dishes presented to him, so smothered in condiments and sauces as not to preserve an atom of their natural flavour. It was a long affair too, and when it was over he exclaimed with a sigh of relief:

"Well, at any rate, now they'll let me have an hour's peace."

But the major-domo appeared, and reminded him that the fencing-master was waiting. So poor Denkichi was obliged to incase himself in a heavy suit of chain armour, and for more than an hour attack and defend, repeat, parry, cut, lunge, and dance about until he was well-nigh dropping with fatigue.

After the fencing came the master of Chinese, and after the master of Chinese the music instructor.

A few cups of tea—spoilt, so thought Denkichi, by the infusion of cherry flower—somewhat refreshed him, and for the first time during the day he was enabled to get a few minutes of such rest as his stiff raiment would allow him. But the business of the day was by no means over.

A council of the heads of the ward was held, at which Denkichi presided, and again he had to sit listening to dry arguments on questions of law, petty differences of opinion, long speeches, and statements about matters in which he did not feel the slightest interest. This was followed by the evening meal, an entertainment just as formal and twice as lengthy as that at midday.

He was almost asleep with weariness and fatigue, and would have crept into his sumptuous bedchamber, but the major-domo—how he hated that major-domo—told him that a new theatre had been opened in the quarter, and that the people would be offended if the lord were not to honour the first night with his presence.

A fresh suit, if possible, heavier and stiffer than the first, was necessary for this performance, and not until the small hours of the next morning could poor Denkichi at last throw himself down between the quilts, only to be aroused in a short time to meet the assembly of suitors.

So for a week this continued, with but little variation. On the evening of the sixth day, Inari appeared.

"Well," he said, "how do you like it?"

Denkichi fell down on his knees. "Let me go back this minute!" he cried, "and never more shall you hear a word of discontent pass my mouth."

Inari granted his prayer, and he found himself back again at the hut at Shinagawa with O Taki by his side.

So utterly wearied and worn out was he that he slept during the whole of the next day, and then he related his experiences to a wondering circle of friends. But he never more was heard to grumble at his lowly condition.

FRANK ABELL.

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THE LION'S WARS

The Cabul War of 1836-1842.

INDIA is such a far off land, its people, climate, and country so different to our own, that till recently events of even the most vital importance excited but a languid interest. The mutiny in 1857 roused the country, it is true, but the danger once passed we paid little heed to its affairs till the stealthy but unceasing extension of the Russian empire in Asia woke into active life the Sleeping Lion of Britain.

To-day we keep a watchful eye on India, and especially Afghanistan. We know that its existence as an independent buffer state, for which the mountainous character of the country admirably fits it, renders India secure.

Our great Indian rulers foresaw, as far back as the commencement of the century, the dangers to be apprehended from foreign aggression, and it was a cardinal feature in their policy not only that Afghanistan should not be weakened by civil strife but that its rulers should take their policy from Calcutta.

In 1838 Lord Auckland, then Governor-General of India, sent an army into the country to reinstate Shah Sujah-el-Malek on his long lost throne of Afghanistan, His lordship at the same time issued a proclamation declaring that he was acting in the interests of the Afghan people whose welfare he had at heart.

It was necessary that we should intervene, for our secret agents had discovered that the Shah of Persia, forgetting with true Oriental ingratitude that he was indebted to us for his throne, was intriguing with Russia. Dost Mohammud, the Ameer of Afghanistan, had given so many proofs of his loyalty to the British that when the Shah of Persia, secretly encouraged by Russia, publicly proclaimed his intention of seizing Herat, Dost naturally looked to England for protection.

Why Lord Auckland should have refused assistance, especially as he knew that Persia and Russia were hand in glove with each other, seems strange. But he did, his motive, it is stated, being that he had conceived the wild idea of restoring to the throne of Afghanistan the old and once formidable Duram dynasty in the person of Shah Sujah. Whether the Afghans would have preferred Shah Sujah to their reigning monarch matters not. They probably liked neither, but as they hated foreign intervention more, they at once, as soon as it transpired that Shah Sujah had accepted the British offer, prepared for war.

At the close of the year 1838 a British army of 30,000 men, officered and paid by the East India Company, crossed the Indus in two columns. The first check was caused by the refusal of Ranjit Singh, the head of the Sikhs, to allow us to pass through his territory. This compelled the troops to descend the Indus a thousand miles and march by way of Kandahar to the Afghan capital. After leaving the boats they crossed the wilderness of Cutch Gandara. The distance across was only 150 miles, but the heat was so great that the mortality amongst the men and cattle from want of water was terrible.

After Sir John Keane had assumed command, one of the columns was sent through the Bolar pass in the Brahm mountains, sixty-six miles in length. Fearing

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attack, our men by means of a forced march, upset the Afghan plans, and managed to arrive at the other side without incurring loss.

On April 6th the two columns met near Quetta, and after resting, separated to continue their march on the capital. Again the plans of the Afghans were defeated. After the spies of the enemy had discovered our route, we retraced our steps and proceeded through the pass of Kajuk.

On April 25th Shah Sujah entered Kandahar. The other column arrived on May 4th, and the army encamped under the walls of the city. On arriving at Ghazni on the 21st of the following month the men found that the town was protected by fortifications of such strength that a siege train would be necessary for their destruction. The walls were of immense thickness and sixty feet high. In front were several ditches filled with water and not shallow enough to ford, and further protection was afforded by a deep river. What was to be done? An assault would have entailed heavy loss and a retreat still greater dangers. Knowing the treacherous character of the Afghan the garrison was sounded. A traitor was soon found. A nephew of Dost Mohammud offered for a large sum to betray his uncle's fortress.

Whilst our artillery was thundering at the enemy's wall on the night of the 22nd, a party of engineers exploded three hundred pounds of gunpowder at a secret gate called Kabul shattering it in ruins. The storming party under Colonel Downie at once dashed into the fort. Leaping over the debris our men rushed forward, completely surprising the garrison. At this juncture the gallant little advance guard nearly came to grief.

The main column under Brigadier General Sale was hurrying in the footsteps of their comrades when one of the engineers of the exploding party rushed up, saying that the gateway was so blocked up with fallen masonry that it would be impossible to enter. Sale had already ordered the retreat when he noticed that the man seemed strangely excited. What if the shock of the explosion had unhinged his reason. So he ran to the gate and to his joy found it clear.

"Now my men," cried Sale, "make haste or we shall be too late."

The little band, back to back, were fighting for their lives when assistance arrived. Then ensued perhaps one of the most desperate fights ever recorded in history. Our men were confronted with the very pick of the Afghan warriors whom they resisted for over two hours.

One enormous Afghan nearly ended the career of General Sale. He had brought the Englishman to the ground with a sabre cut, and had drawn slightly back to deliver another, when his foot slipped and he fell. In a moment the Englishman was on him. Over and over they rolled amongst the other combatants. During the struggle the hardy mountaineer made repeated efforts to draw his dagger but his wrist was held in a grip of iron. Suddenly the General developed a fresh attack. Quitting his hold on the other wrist he made a supreme effort and jerked the mountaineer on his back. Before his antagonist could draw his dagger, Sale had seized a sword and with the pummel battered his foe's head till he became insensible. There were other hand-to-hand encounters equally as desperate as this one but space forbids our dealing with them.

After a desperate struggle the garrison capitulated. Our loss in killed was seventeen and 165 wounded. Of the Afghans we not only killed 600, but we took 1,600 prisoners. But it was the capture of a fortress they had fondly believed was invulnerable that made the Afghans indisposed to continue the struggle. Dost Mohammud besought his officers to try their fortune once more against the Feringhi dogs but they hung back.

"I will put myself at your head and after my death you can make your own terms with Shah Sujah," he said, but ere the chiefs, who asked a day for thought, could decide, the British had reached the capital. Finding that the town was threatened in two directions the Ameer sent his artillery to Argandeh and fled on August 2nd towards the Hindoo Kush. A strong force of cavalry under an officer afterwards known as Sir James Outram at once started in pursuit. But their guide, the nephew of Dost Mohammud who had helped them to win Ghazni, being an impartial sort of traitor, this time befriended his relative. He took our gold it is true but he directed our men wrongly.

In due course Shah Sujah was installed as Ameer but regarding him as the puppet of a foreign power the Afghans resolved on the first opportunity to depose him. Calcutta soon learnt that in Afghanistan potentates placed on the throne by the sword have to be kept there by the sword. The army of invasion therefore became the army of occupation. Then our troubles commenced.

Shah Sujah's rule was soon so openly scouted, that in a very short time his authority extended no further than the territory occupied by the British Army. Seeing that the dangers of our occupation would increase unless we captured Dost Mohammud, Sir Robert Sale was instructed to obtain possession of this person. After a hunt extending over two years, he ran the ex-Shah to earth.

When the authorities at Calcutta received the unfortunate potentate, they thought that Afghanistan would at last settle down. They were wrong. Ever since the British occupation, a secret conspiracy had been maturing to expel the intruders. Although its ramifications extended to all parts of the country, the secret had been so well kept that the British Resident, Sir Alexander Burnes, was blissfully unconscious of its existence. Even when Abdula Khan, a chief with an exceptionally evil reputation, even for an Afghan, dropped dark hints as to what was in store for us, no suspicions were aroused.

Early one morning a howling mob collected outside the British Residency. Sir Alexander attempted to address the crowd and was stoned. When one of his suite fell shot through the brain, the fury became general, till finally the Kabulese, after setting the house on fire, attempted to storm it. With death staring him in the face, Burnes allowed a treacherous Afghan, who promised to effect his escape, to disguise him; but no sooner did he reach the garden than the guide called on the crowd to slay the English dog. A forest of knives gleamed in the air and the Resident was soon hacked to pieces. The native soldiers attached to the British Residency offered a brave resistance, but they were overcome, and the inmates of the house, men, women, and children, slaughtered.

On the news reaching the British camp, Colonel Campbell was ordered to proceed to the Presidency with assistance. Losing his way, his men presently found themselves in one of the narrow streets of the city. He had not gone far when the progress of the columns was checked by a strong barricade. As they turned to retrace their steps, the mob closed round the

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One big Afghan was carried to a little group in which were crouching some ladies with their little ones.

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little force, the deadly knife claiming so many victims that but for the arrival of Brigadier Shelton they would have been massacred to a man.

Although the safety of our Army was now seriously menaced, further disasters might have been averted had the generals in command acted with common courage and prudence. With a lack of judgment that was simply incredible the little force was at once divided into two divisions. One being stationed at Bala Hissar and the other at some cantonments quite two miles off, the difficulties of communication being greatly increased by the river Kabul and a broad canal which ran between them.

But there were worse blunders committed. All the supplies were lodged in a small weak fort nearly half-a-mile from either of the stations and, to crown all, neither of the British camps could possibly be defended being located in a hollow surrounded by lofty hills. Two days later our incapable general sent a detachment to enter the city. It was so ridiculously small that it was at once driven back with heavy loss.

Now thoroughly alarmed, General Sale was ordered up from Jalalabad, and General Nott who was at Kandahar was asked for a couple of regiments. Nott sent reinforcements but they were driven back, and Sale being short of provisions and ammunition was compelled to withhold assistance.

A short respite and then a few days later thousands of Afghans, attracted by the prospect of plunder, swarmed round the British camp. Their first act was to force us to abandon the commissariat fort which they at once looted. When Shah Sujah, from the battlements of Bala Hissar, saw his triumphant subjects leaving the fort in hundreds laden with booty he exclaimed, "Surely the English must be mad."

Why General Elphinstone did not at once join the divided forces it is impossible to imagine. Led by a Commander who understood his business the British troops in Afghanistan should have made short work of any force brought against them. What Elphinstone did, although he had enough supplies for twelve months, was to write to Macnaghten, the new Resident, advocating a retreat. His officers then becoming alarmed persuaded Elphinstone to recall Shelton and give him the post of second in command. But Shelton, although a man of great courage, was of so fiery a disposition that his plain speaking so irritated his chief that any advice he gave was scouted. The Afghans, emboldened by our inactivity now began to encircle us. Shelton led a couple of sorties with his usual bravery, but by this time our men had lost all confidence in their commanders, and on both occasions retreated.

A little later we captured a fort the enemy had erected close to our position, but it was a near thing, and the operation cost us 200 men.

Fate seemed to have mapped us out for special persecution, for the imbecility which characterised our operations in this war now extended to our diplomacy also. Lieutenant Conolly, who filled the post of political agent to the Ameer, offered 15,000 rupees for the heads of the principal Afghan leaders. His instrument, Mohun Lal, soon found a couple of ruffians who expressed their willingness to undertake the job, but their nerves failing they split on their employers. Enraged at this perfidy the Afghans assembled on the heights and for several days rained on our troops below a most deadly fire.

Ordered to attack, Shelton stormed the heights, but he could not maintain his position and two days later had to retreat. After a rest he again carried the enemy's position but having only old-fashioned pieces of ordnance the Afghans were able, by creeping round the side of the hill to take us in flank. Worn with hunger and fatigue, convinced that their position was hopeless, not a man stirred when Shelton in order to anticipate the coming onslaught gave the word to charge. An Afghan chief planted a standard 30ft. from where our men had formed into square. "I'll give £50 to the man who pulls that flag down," cried Shelton.

The shadow of disaster weighed heavily on our men, and the offer was unheeded. When the Afghans charged, our men bolted to their cantonments. British soldiers flying from the foe! It sounds incredible, but it was true. Macnaghten then invited the Afghan chiefs to a conference, and signed a treaty agreeing to evacuate the country in three days.

Although Macnaghten hypocritically declared that we parted as friends, the wily Afghans were not to be deceived. They contrived to delay our departure till December 18th, when snow was falling, and Macnaghten, on his part, in the hopes of reinforcements arriving, tried to delay the march still more. Disappointed, he communicated with Akbar Khan offering to make him Prime Minister if he would have the Afghan chiefs arrested.

Akbar, who was the son of Dost Mohammed, pretended to assent, lured the British official to a meeting, and told him he should hold him as hostage for his father. In the scuffle which followed Macnaghten lost his life. Incredible as it may seem, the British generals actually offered to renew the treaty, which was, of course, annulled by this dastardly murder.

The demands of the Afghans then rose. They insisted that all but six guns should be surrendered, all spare muskets, and that General Sale, his wife and daughter, and the wives of some of the other officers should be also left behind as guests.

On January 6th, 1842, a force of 15,000 men, of whom 4,500 were British soldiers, demoralised by the incapacity of their commander, started on their ill-fated march home. No sooner had they started than their troubles began afresh.

Stimulated by prospects of plunder, the Afghans hung on their flanks like wolves. The soldier who fell out of the ranks for a moment's rest was doomed. A creeping form, two swift blows with the long Afghan knife, and then a crowd of wretches tearing the clothes off their victim for hidden valuables. The little force had hardly gone ten miles when the mountain thieves, impatient to begin, attacked the baggage guard. A deadly struggle and the survivors fly, leaving fifty wounded comrades in the hands of an enemy to whom mercy was an unknown quality.

There was no need to tell their tale when, panting and exhausted, the survivors reached their companions. Why speak when all knew that what had happened was only the prelude of worse disasters yet to come?

The close of the first day found the army so exhausted that, although the men knew the air of night was thick with peril, they sank to sleep, their only covering the snow. When the cold grey light of morn stole into the sky, the survivors awoke. With eyes averted, for the snow was deeply crimsoned, they rushed away, wondering why the greedy knife had not claimed them as well. Those dreadful nights—the days were bad enough—narrowing paths blocked at the end and bringing the little force to halt whilst death rained

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down on them from the heights above. Still the light was not withheld, and sometimes they saw their foes.

But the nights. A shuddering, cowering soldier half asleep would hear a sigh, a murmured prayer, a stealthy step gliding away in search of other victims, and then one comrade less at dawn.

At the close of the third day the troops staggered into a little mountain valley, looking so peaceful and pure in its garment of white that a hope grew up in their hearts that even foes as merciless as theirs would shrink from marring the beauty of this lovely scene.

Vain illusion. By morning the owners had transformed it into a shambles. This crowning calamity snapped the bonds of discipline. Freed from restraint, the men turned savagely on their officers, and would have played the game of murder, too, had not one exclaimed: "Why stain our hands with blood when their doom is sealed?"

Their ranks now thinned so rapidly that the survivors huddled together, as they staggered along, for warmth and safety. Up the mountain side where the sun shone clear and cold, down into cavernous depths where tribute was exacted, growing ever weaker and weaker till, scorning traps and ambuscades, the mountaineer met and fought them hand-to-hand. Then came a lull, and the few survivors began to hope that their troubles were at an end. Another rush, and this time so fierce that one big Afghan was carried to a little group, in the centre of which were crouching some ladies, wives of the officers and men, with their little ones.

There were no more respites after this. Hopeless as their plight seemed, the bulk of the army, or rather rabble, might have escaped if they had pushed on with as few halts as possible; but General Elphinstone, with the fatal lack of judgment which had characterised his proceedings throughout the campaign, halted at Batkah.

This gave time for Akbar Khan and a stronge force of Afghan horse to overtake the fugitives. The wily chief offered to spare the lives of the retreating force, but declared that hostages must be forthcoming for the surrender of Jellalabad. Major Pottinger, Captain Laurence, and Mackenzie were accordingly surrendered. The march was then resumed; but when they reached the awful pass of Khurd Kabul their remaining stock of hope gave out.

The tribes that lived in this gloomy country knew nothing of what this little force had suffered. Neither did they care. They lived by plunder, and were not averse to murder. The poor ladies, who had borne up with undaunted courage, sank sobbing to the ground as they gazed into the depths of this dread defile. Shorn as our men were of their courage, the little manhood left them kindled into sudden light at the grief of these poor souls.

Six hours of desperate fighting and they were clear again. But the losses; over 3,000 British soldiers perished in this ill-omened spot.

The remnant staggered on, dozing in the snow at night, and creeping along during the day. A little later the treacherous Akbar again appeared, offering to take charge of all the ladies and children who remained alive. Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, and nine other ladies agreed to go. It was well they did, for in a narrow gorge next day we lost 200 more.

Of the 15,000 men who had left Kabul, only 500 were now left. When they neared the frontier the little remnant were set upon by the Ghilzees, the fiercest of all the mountain tribes. From this point they had literally to fight their way, every inch being fiercely disputed by their remorseless enemies. One by one they either dropped overcome by exhaustion, or fell victims to the deadly knife. The number of survivors was only two by the time Futtchabad was reached, and of these one then died of hunger.

Out of the entire force of 4,500 men only one man, a Scottish surgeon named Bryden, escaped to Fellalabad. Counting camp followers, it is calculated that 26,000 lives were lost in this retreat.

The great heart of the nation stood still when it heard the news, and then silently but steadfastly prepared for vengeance.

[Another thrilling battle story next week.]

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The Editor begs to inform his readers that he has been fortunate enough to secure some excellent stories of a special nature, which will appear in due course, and which will do much to enhance the already great popularity of SHORT STORIES. Further particulars regarding these tales will be given next week. Meanwhile the Editor will be pleased if readers will call the attention of any of their friends who enjoy good fiction to this brief announcement.

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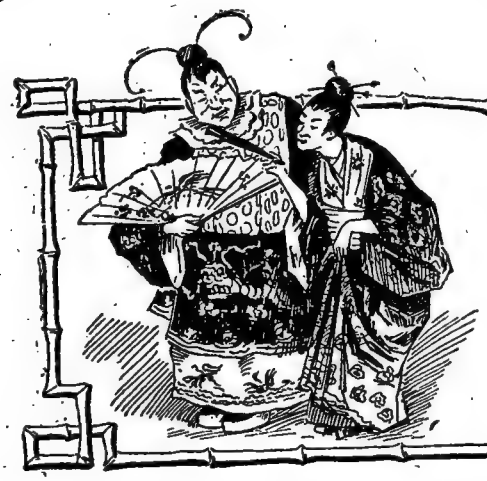

Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XXXV.—HE MAKES SOME AFTER NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.

ALL was peace and harmony in the house of Bowser. Dinner had been disposed of, and the Bowsers sat reading, and the family cat lay on the hearthrug and slowly opened and shut her eyes and purred in contentment.

By and by Mr. Bowser laid down his paper, heaved a sigh of satisfaction as he looked around and then said:

"Mrs. Bowser, New Year's day has come and gone some weeks ago."

"Yes," she answered.

"In the early part of a year most people look back over the last twelve months and call up their shortcomings and determine to avoid them in the future."

"It is what they call 'swearing off,' isn't it?"

"Yes. It has got so that everybody pokes fun at the man who makes New Year resolves, but nevertheless it is right and proper that one should decide to do this or that to better things. I didn't say anything to you on New Year's day, but yet I had several things in mind."

Mrs. Bowser looked at him and felt a slight chill pass over her. If he had determined on any change of conduct, it would end in a riot in less than two hours.

"No; I didn't say anything on that day," he continued, "but I'm going to say something now. I have firmly and fully made up my mind to do different in certain matters. I shall make my resolves now. Mrs. Bowser, do you know I've got to be an old crank—a silly old crank, with ears a foot long?"

"You are nothing of the kind," she protested. "You get out of sorts now and then, as all husbands do, but that's to be expected. There is nothing you need feel conscience stricken over."

"But there are dozens of things. Yes; I'm an old crank and a bully. About four nights out of seven I come home ready for a row. If nothing else is wrong, I find a shirt button on the floor and use it as an excuse. By gum, but when I think of the rows I have raised over nothing I wonder that you have not stabbed me with a poisoned bodkin as I slept. The fact that you haven't simply proves that you are one of the sweetest and best little women in all the world."

"You have done nothing," she reiterated, "and so there is no need of any new resolves. Was there any late news of the war to-day?"

"I don't know anything about news of the war, but I do know that I'll make a change in myself or hire some jackass to kick me to death. Mrs. Bowser, I've been an old lallaloo."

In his agitation Mr. Bowser got up and began gesturing, and the cat grinned to herself and saw fun ahead.

"What's a lallaloo?" asked Mrs. Bowser.

"I don't know, but it's something very mean. Now, you look at me and hear me as I say from this time forth:

"First.—I'm not going to rage and roar around when I find a clothespin on the doorstep.

"Mrs. Bowser, I've been an old lallaloo!"

"Second.—If the beefsteak is over done and the coffee not up to the mark, I'm going to keep my mouth shut.

"Third.—If you discharge the cook, I'm not going to interfere and make a fool of myself.

"Fourth.—If the gas bill is a shilling extra or the coal is gone eleven minutes too soon, I'm not going to jump up and down and charge you with being the most reckless and extravagant woman ever born.

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"Fifth.—I shall bring home a cravat to-morrow, and the very first time I get one of my spells on I shall expect you to turn up your sleeves and hit me across the neck.

"Sixth.—I shall invest in no more tramps, lost dogs, spring tonics or fire escapes, but behave myself like a sensible being. That's all, and now give your old hubby a kiss and let's be happy."

Mrs. Bowser embraced him and told him he was as good as gold and then used all her power of persuasion to get him to sit down to his cigar and newspaper again. She couldn't accomplish it, however. His conscience and his enthusiasm being aroused, he couldn't keep quiet. He wasn't satisfied with being good, but he wanted to be very, very good.

"How on earth you managed to put up with a husband like me all these years is a mystery," he said, as he walked to and fro, with tears in his eyes.

"There is nothing wrong with you," answered Mrs. Bowser, laying aside her book and rising up.

"There has been, yes, a thousand things wrong with me, but there will not be hereafter. When I have played the crank and the fool, why haven't you hired someone to kick me out of the house."

"I must go upstairs and shut the window," she replied as she moved away.

The idea was that if Mr. Bowser was left alone for a quarter-of-an-hour he would calm down and a row would be avoided, and five minutes had passed, and he was growing calmer, when the kitchen bell rang, and in a minute or two the servant brought him up a bill. It was a bill from the butcher amounting to one and four-pence.

Mr. Bowser jumped clear off the floor as he looked it over, and the next moment he was shouting for Mrs. Bowser.

She came rushing downstairs to find the cat grinning with delight and Mr. Bowser as red as paint, and he waved the bill up and down and demanded:

"Do you see this? I gave you butcher money, and what have you done with it? Spent it for novels and chocolates and run me in debt!"

"You made that bill yourself one day last week when you ordered chops. You had a five pound note and the butcher couldn't change it. Don't you remember?"

"Never! Never! I never ordered chops!"

"But you surely did. It was last Wednesday night, and you said it was New Zealand mutton."

"Woman, here is the incontestable evidence!" hoarsely whispered Mr. Bowser as he thrust the bill under her nose. "I give you money—millions of money—and you squander it and run me in debt! What sort of a wife are you?"

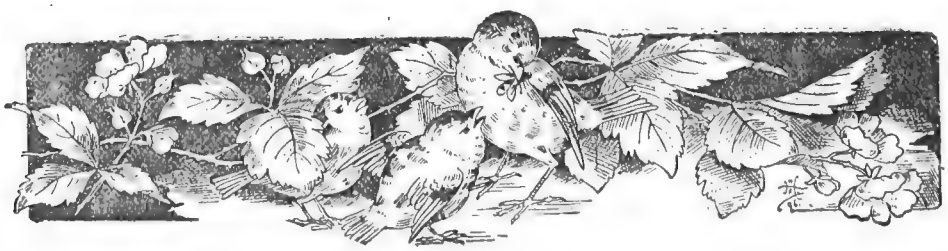
"I thought you had resolved to leave off being a crank," she quietly remarked.

"Crank! Crank!" he shouted as he jumped up and down and flourished the bill in the air. "I was never a crank! I am not a crank now! I give you money to pay cash down. I give——"

"It was a long time before he got up."

The cat stood with her back humped up and a wink in her eye. In his desire to make splinters of something Mr. Bowser rushed at her; but, striking a footstool, he fell over it and came to the floor with a crash and rolled over with his head under the lounge. It was a long time before he got out and sat up. There on the floor lay the guilty butcher bill, and there on the piano stood the innocent cat, gazing down upon him, but Mrs. Bowser had fled and left no tracks behind her.

M. Quad.



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BETWEEN TWO LOVES.

"Well, Jack, old boy, you are a regular ass."

Thus spoke Lieutenant Burton to his friend and brother officer, Lieutenant Edwards.

"Here is one of England's fairest daughters head over ears in love with you. She is good-looking, affectionate, domesticated, and has means—just like the matrimonial adverts. isn't it?—and her father is the C.O. Now, if you had your own interests at heart, you would go in and win, and become the possessor of a lovely wife and greatly enhanced prospects."

"How you rattle on, Tom. If the lady is all you say, which I don't deny, why don't you go in and win yourself?"

"For the simple reason, my boy, that it would be utterly useless. Miss Arnthwaite keeps us all at arm's length, but when you condescend to honour the dances by your presence, her face lights up immediately."

"Don't be absurd, Tom."

"Ditto, my friend. Just because three years ago, a girl, who was not worth a second thought, jilted you for a wealthier suitor, are you going to mope your life away?"

"You know my sentiments, Tom."

"Sentiments be bothered."

"Will you be serious a moment? I don't mind admitting to you that I admire Miss Arnthwaite, but for the reasons I have given you on several previous occasions I shall never get beyond that point."

"What rot," was Lieutenant Burton's reply.

"All right, Tom. We have gone over all this before with the same result. Now suppose we adjourn to our respective couches."

Lieutenant Burton took the hint and departed to his quarters. As he walked along he communed with himself and while anathematizing his friend's obstinacy, he admired his feelings.

The two young officers had been schoolboys together, they had entered the army together and had been modern examples of David and Jonathan.

Three years before my story opens, something had happened which threatened to have a lasting effect upon Jack Edwards.

He had been engaged to the daughter of the vicar down at his home, Dora Armstrong, but suddenly a blow fell upon him.

He had met his sweetheart one evening, and with very little warning she told him that their engagement must become a thing of the past.

Not because she did not love him, said the fickle Dora. It was the old story. The vicar had only a small stipend and a large family.

The gentleman whom she proposed to install in Jack's place was wealthy and influential, and she was going to sacrifice herself for the sake of her father and the family.

She bemoaned the fate which demanded the sacrifice and managed to squeeze a tear or two to add effect to her protestations of affection and regret.

Jack pleaded for a while and then bowed to the inevitable.

It was a great relief to him when his regiment was ordered abroad—to India.

His chum, Tom Burton, of course, accompanied him thither, but before they sailed, the eyes of the discarded lover were opened.

It was the day before their departure. The two friends were seated in their room at the hotel were they had been staying, when a card was brought in by a waiter and the man who had supplanted Jack requested an interview with him.

Greatly wondering what this could mean, Jack told the waiter to show the gentlemen in and Tom he took himself to the smoke-room. The visitor entered.

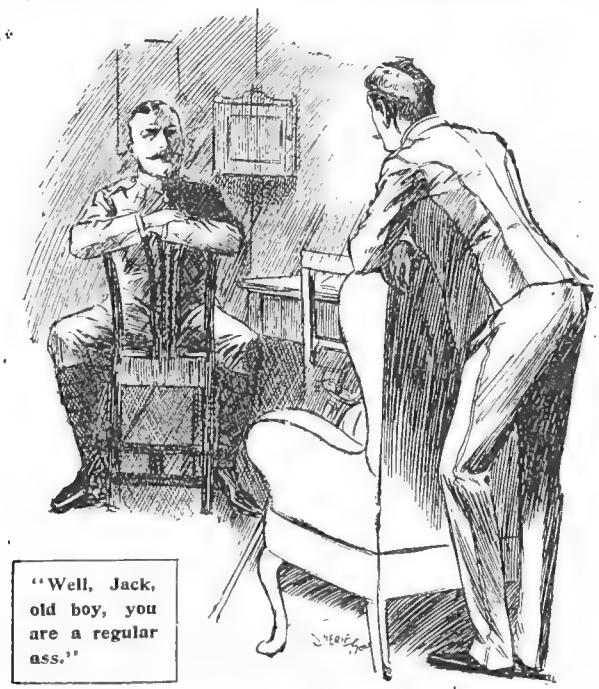
"Lieutenant Edwards, I believe."

Jack assented.

Without waiting for a reply, the visitor went on: "I must apologise for intruding upon you, Mr. Edwards. I am afraid your feelings towards me are not of the friendliest, but I can assure you that any wrong I have done you I have done unwittingly."

"I am afraid I don't follow you," interposed Jack.

"Permit me to explain. I did not know of Miss Armstrong's prior engagement until a few days ago. Had I known of it earlier I should never have made my proposal for her hand, and immediately I learned of it I withdrew. Of course, as you know, your engagement had never been made public, and it was only by accident that I became aware of it. Miss Armstrong has treated us both badly, for she has not been straightforward in her dealings with me either, and she is now free. But, if you will permit a stranger to advise you, you will think no more of her. I could not let you leave England, however, without setting myself right in your eyes. Now I am contented."



"Well, Jack, old boy, you are a regular ass."

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"You have acted most honourably, sir," replied the agitated officer, "but I am not quite sure that I can express any degree of gratitude at present. The information you give is very painful to me, as you will readily understand."

After his visitor's departure, Jack Edwards and his chum discussed the subject together.

Lieutenant Burton was very indignant and spoke very strongly, but when he had finished, Jack replied:

"Dora may be all that you have said, Tom, and yet because she is Dora, I still love her and am perfectly willing to marry her if she will have me."

Tom could do nothing but indulge in a wide eyed stare and a prolonged whistle when he heard this.

"I mean it Tom," went on Edwards.

"Do you? Then you are absolutely and hopelessly mad, that's all I have to say."

"All right, Tom, wait until your turn to fall in love comes."

"Long may it be delayed then, if there is any probability of it affecting me in the same way."

Lieutenant Edwards, in pursuance of his declared resolution, wrote to Dora Armstrong at the first opportunity.

He waited patiently for some time and then the reply came.

It was a refusal. Dora for some reason imagined he had had something to do with the eye-opening of his wealthy successor, and on these grounds expressed anything but regard for her former lover.

"That settles it," remarked Lieutenant Edwards when the received this missive.

"Does that effect your cure?" inquired Tom when the information was communicated to him.

"It cures me so far as this," replied Jack. "It practically condemns me to a bachelor's life, for while Dora Armstrong lives, I shall never marry."

"Why on earth not?" queried Tom.

"For this reason. Although, I have been most shabbily treated by Dora I still love her, and that being so, I could not in honour ask another woman to become my wife."

Time after time had the two friends been over this ground.

It was as Tom Burton said.

The pretty daughter of the Colonel reserved her sweetest smiles for the man who had banished himself from the land of domestic bliss.

Vainly had Tom tried to shake his friend's resolution. Up to the time our story opens he had failed to move him.

As he strolled home after that last conversation Tom Burton, good friend and chum that he was, meditated deeply on the subject.

"It's enough to make one wish the girl would die," muttered he. "If she would only oblige us by shuffling off this mortal coil, then perhaps my Quixotic friend would have eyes and heart for someone else."

Then another thought occurred to Lieutenant Burton. He wondered if it were possible to get a fictitious announcement inserted in the death list of one of the English papers. If this were done, possibly it would effect the object, but after reflecting thereon for a time he dismissed the idea as impracticable and too risky.

Three uneventful months passed and the subject was not again mentioned. Lieutenant Burton was taking it easy in his quarters. The mail had come in that day, and he had slung himself into a hammock to enjoy his letters and read the papers which had been sent out to him.

He got through the news and then turned his attention to the advertisements. Suddenly he bounded out of his hammock, and regardless of the dangers of sunstroke or heat apoplexy, he raced bareheaded across the square to his chum's quarters.

Just as he got to the door he stopped, thought a moment and then put the paper under his tunic. Having done this he walked into Lieutenant Edward's room.

"Any news from home, Jack?" he asked.

"Two letters—one from the mater and another from an old chum."

"Any mention of Miss Armstrong in them?"

"No! Why do you ask? You look rather excited."

"Do I? Well I suppose I am."

The visitor entered. "Lieutenant Edwards, I believe."

"What has happened, man? Who has she married?"

"She is not married, Jack, she is dead."

"Dead? Dora dead?" queried Jack. "How did you learn this?"

For answer Lieutenant Burton drew out the paper and pointed out the paragraph. Yes, there it was plainly enough.

> Armstrong—on the 7th. inst., at the Grange, Lydenham, Dora, only daughter of F. Armstrong, Esq. Friends will kindly accept this, the only intimation.

Jack Edwards read it through slowly and then re-read it.

"Poor Dora," he muttered, and as his chum, Burton, gazed upon him he realised how devotedly Jack Edwards

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must have once loved this girl who had died so prematurely.

When he remembered how he had almost wished for her death he felt a pang of remorse, and yet he could not entirely repress the thought that it was better so.

Very little was said on that occasion. Tom Burton left his chum busy with his reflections, but nevertheless he resolved to do his best to bring about the result he had so long had in his mind.

As time rolled on, the depression which had followed the news of Dora's death, wore off and Jack Edwards began to drift more and more into the scenes of gaiety, wherewith the officers and men stationed at the fort enlivened their period of service there.

While his late sweetheart lived he would most religiously have adhered to his oft expressed resolution, but with Dora dead he felt himself free to avail himself of the chance of happiness which presented itself to him.

Six months after he had seen that newspaper notice he sought Evelyn Arnthwaite's hand in marriage. Once, and once only, had he given expression to any doubt on the subject of Dora Armstrong's death. He and his chum were chatting together when he suddenly broached the subject.

"Tom," he said, "it's very strange my people have never mentioned Dora's death in their letters."

"Nothing strange about it, to my mind, old boy. It only shows their tact. They were afraid of stirring painful memories, and considered it best not to mention it, and if I were in your place I should say nothing of it to them. Let the dead past remain buried."

The subject was never mentioned again.

Jack was a promising young officer, and though he was not overburdened with wealth, he had quite enough of world's goods to enable him to support a wife.

Hence, when he approached his colonel as a suppliant for Evelyn's hand, that gentleman, who was not in the least a mercenary man, gave a ready consent. In a very short time Jack Edwards and Evelyn Arnthwaite were united, the reason of the short engagement being that the Colonel was retiring from the service and was going home to England.

Shortly after the wedding, at which Tom Burton most joyously assisted in the capacity of best man, the Colonel and his wife sailed for home, and Jack settled down to the enjoyment of his long deferred domestic bliss.

Evelyn was devoted to her husband, and he in turn displayed a great amount of affection for his wife, but all too soon their dream of bliss ended, and this was how it happened.

The new C.O. was expected and the officers of the station had assembled to meet him. The carriage containing the new chief and his wife came round a bend in the hills.

Jack Edwards and Tom Barton were of course among the group waiting to give them a hearty reception.

As the carriage came into view Jack focussed his glasses on the occupants. For a moment he gazed and then an exclamation startled Lieutenant Burton. Turning, he looked at his friend. He was white and agitated.

"What's the matter, Jack? You look as though you had seen a ghost."

"Why, it's Jack—I mean Lieutenant Edwards!"

"It is not a ghost, but a horrible reality," replied Jack hoarsely. "Dora Armstrong is in that carriage with the Colonel and his wife."

"What! you must be dreaming," said Burton.

"Would to God I were," he answered.

Lieutenant Burton seized the glasses and gazed intently at the rapidly approaching vehicle.

"Great Scott," he muttered. "What does it mean?"

Then he turned swiftly on Jack.

"Look here, old boy, forgive my seeming impertinence, but don't forget you are now the husband of another and a better woman, and for Heaven's sake pull yourself together."

Jack made an effort, and by the time the carriage arrived he had regained somewhat of his composure.

One by one the officers were introduced to their new chief, his wife and his wife's companion, for it was in this latter capacity Dora Armstrong had arrived in

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india, Jack was one of the last as he purposely delayed the meeting as long as possible.

He greatly rejoiced that a passing indisposition had kept his wife from this scene. He shook hands with the Colonel, was introduced to the Colonel's wife, and was just bracing himself for the ordeal of his meeting with Dora Armstrong, when that lady sprang forward:

"Why it's Jack—I mean Lieutenant Edwards!"

"What! have you two met before?" interposed the Colonel.

"We were acquainted in England, sir," replied Jack.

"Then I will leave you to escort Miss Armstrong to her new abode," said the C. O., and so saying he turned away, followed by his staff.

"You seem surprised to see me," remarked Dora.

"I—I thought you were dead," stammered Jack.

"Are you sure the wish was not father to the thought?"

"Perfectly sure. But I saw the announcement in the papers."

Dora laughed, and the laugh jarred upon Jack.

"That was my cousin."

"But the notice said: 'Dora Armstrong, only daughter of F. Armstrong Esq.' and the death took place at your home."

"Yes, my cousin, whose full name was Dorothy, was on a visit to us when she caught a chill and died."

"But how about the F. Armstrong and the only daughter? Was that a mistake?"

"No it was perfectly correct. Dorothy was the only daughter of Uncle Fred, and Frank is my father's name. Hence the similarity in the initals."

"It was a very unfortunate mistake."

"What! do you mean to say you wish the notice had referred to me?"

"No, I don't mean that. But let us change the subject."

"Very well. Tell me something of yourself."

"Well first of all, I suppose you have heard of my marriage?"

"You married?" ejaculated Dora. "Where is your wife?"

"She was unable to come with me to-day, owing to a slight indisposition."

"You must take me and give me an introduction."

Jack hesitated before replying. After a moment's thought he spoke.

"Let us be perfectly plain with each other, Miss Armstrong. In view of the past I would rather not. You will of course meet at some of the social functions of the station and I would prefer that the introduction came about in that way, and through some one else."

"Very well," replied Miss Armstrong coldly.

By this time they had reached her new home, and having thus done his duty, Jack excused himself and withdrew, a prey to conflicting emotions.

"Dora Armstrong alive and here," he soliloquised. "Why has Fate played this strange trick upon me?"

The fact of the matter was Jack Edwards realised that the old feeling was not dead, that the sight of Dora Armstrong's face had fanned into flame all the old love, and here he was married to another woman. In his perplexity he sought out his chum, Lieutenant Burton, listened gravely to his friends anxious remarks.

"It is truly a distressing position. You must not get too friendly with Dora Armstrong. On the other hand, if you cause her to hate you, I am afraid she will prove mischievous. You remember the poet's remark, 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned!'"

As he entered Dora flashed him a look of defiance.

Lieutenant Edwards groaned aloud.

"Come, old boy, cheer up. You must face the position like a man. You must crush down these feelings. There must be no disloyalty to your wife."

Edwards rose and went off to his own quarters.

As soon as he entered his wife noticed his agitated look.

"What is the matter, Jack?"

"I am not very well, dear. I think I shall go and lie down."

At that moment he could not talk to his wife.

Accordingly he withdrew to his own room and flung himself on the bed, but not to sleep, only to think.

His reveries were disturbed by the sound of voices in the outer room. Evidently there were visitors. A voice, which he knew too well broke upon his ear.

"Mrs. Edwards, I presume."

"Yes!" replied his wife, with a note of pride in her voice.

"I felt I must come and see you. Jack—I mean your husband and I were such great friends at home."

Jack shivered with apprehension. His wife knew nothing of her husband's earlier attachment.

He arose and joined the ladies. As he entered Dora flashed him a look of defiance.

"You see I have soon found you out," she said.

"Miss Armstrong informs me that you are old friends," interposed Evelyn.

"We *were* friends," replied Jack.

"Were friends?" said Dora.

"Yes! were, but that is past and I am surprised you should force yourself upon me here after what I said to you earlier in the day."

Dora flushed with anger. She had come out, think-

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ing to re-establish her sway over her old sweetheart. The news of his marriage had somewhat disconcerted and piqued her, although she had rejected him. After these words there was nothing more to be said. Her position there, was very embarrassing. Accordingly she withdrew, but as she did so, she fired a final shot:

"I am afraid residence in India has not improved your husband, Mrs. Edwards," she said as she turned to go. Neither husband nor wife replied, and she departed.

"Who is that woman, Jack?" asked Evelyn, when she had gone.

"We knew each other years ago, but she behaved so badly that it ended. To tell the truth we were once sweethearts, but now we are nothing to each other. In fact, until to-day I thought she was dead. Now, dear, let us say no more about her."

Thus the matter dropped.

Days and weeks passed by, Lieutenant Edwards and Dora Armstrong met each other occasionally, but there was no sign of further trouble and the officer's mind became easier again.

At last the blow fell.

Jack had been away for several days on an expedition. When he returned it was to find his wife absent, and a note was handed to him by his servant. It was brief, very brief.

"The enclosed will speak for itself," it said. "By the time you return I shall have reached the coast and have taken my passage home."

Jack reeled, and then feverishly read the enclosure. It was the note he had written after hearing of the break with the other man. By a fatal chance that note had been headed with nothing but the date. No address, no year was given, and the scorned woman had used it most unscrupulously.

"Dear Dora," it ran, "though I feel deeply hurt by your conduct, yet I still love you. Even though another has intervened, still there is no reason why we should not again be happy in each other's love. Until I know your feeling on the matter I will say no more, but it only needs a word from you to restore our old relations, Yours ever, Jack."

This was dated April 8th. It had been written three years before. The letter had evidently been most carefully preserved. It was now April 12th, but three years later. What a fiend the woman was. Truly "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

Jack dashed out of his quarters, and heedless of military etiquette he rushed into the Colonel's residence and demanded to be confronted with Miss Armstrong. The Colonel gazed in astonishment at the angry Lieutenant, but on hearing his explanation his face grew very grave.

"Miss Armstrong is dead," he answered. "She died two days ago from the effects of poison, self-administered. She had left a note for you, which I kept, as we were informed your wife had gone away for a few days to the coast. He brought the note. Jack seized it and feverishly tore it open. Its contents were the ravings of a maddened brain.

DEAR JACK,

After you wrote I found out how much I loved you, but it was also after my refusal. I came out here hoping to find you and again win your affection, but when you insulted me before your wife my love turned to hate and I determined to be revenged and then to die. Fate has given me the chance and I have taken it. Your wife believes you faithless and has left you. Now you will know what I felt when you scorned me.

DORA.

This time Jack acted promptly. The Colonel granted him the necessary leave at once and he immediately set off for the coast. There he ascertained that his wife had not sailed for England. In fact she was lying dangerously ill with brain fever at an hotel. Jack was shown into her room and as he saw her altered appearance he flung himself down by the bedside in agony. Now, his wife occupied his whole heart and he fervently prayed that she might not be lost to him. For several days her life hung in the balance. Then consciousness returned, but with the first returning gleams, the doctor insisted upon Jack retiring until he had prepared his patient for the interview. The next meeting between husband and wife was a touching one. Forgiveness was mutually asked and given, and when Evelyn had fully regained her strength, they returned to the station, where they received an ovation.

Lieutenant Burton was the first to greet them. Clasping his chum's hand, he said with deep fervour: "Thank God, the plot failed!"

Jack looked more than he could say, and thenceforward the current of his life ran smoothly.

JOHN HENRY PEAT.

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SHORT STORIES THAT MAKE YOU LAUGH.

The Prize of One Guinea for the best Storyette has been won this week by Mr. F. W. FINCH, of 236 Leicester Causeway, Coventry.

Quite Simple.

PATRICK is a big policeman whose good humour and promptness in emergencies have endeared him to the people in the district over which he is a guardian angel.

One day he noticed that a street workman was leaving an unsightly pile of gravel at the side of the road.

"Come, now, you can't leave that heap there," said Patrick sternly.

"Well, I've no place to put it," said the workman.

"You can't leave it there," persisted Patrick.

"What'll I do with it, then?" asked the workman, sullenly.

"Do with it!" echoed Patrick. "Dig a hole in the road, to be sure, man, and bury it!" F. W. F.

At a Classical Concert.

ONE item was a septet, the general idea of which, to my untrained ears, seemed to be that the seven instruments were engaged on the contract of levelling a musical scrap heap. The foreman on the job had evidentally been called away, consequently the instruments had it all their own way. For a few minutes they would go shovelling away at the heap in a promiscuous go-as-you-please style.

Then the clarionet and the fiddle would challenge each other as to which could load his barrow first, and the crochets and semi-quavers fairly flew, while the rest of the instruments stood round, and the flute saw fair play. Bye-and-by, when the fiddle seemed to be having the worst of it, you could hear the 'cello spit on his hands, so to speak, and go in to help it, while the clarionet accidentally dropped a shovelful of accidentals on to the toes of the double bass, which caused it to growl and swear in a way that ought not to be allowed.

Thus the work went on. At first it was interesting, but soon it became wearisome. At the end of twenty minutes, by which time the septet didn't seem to have worked any particular diminution on the scrap heap, I went outside to smoke until they had completed the job and swept up, and I forgot to return. G. E. G.

Thick-Skinned.

A DEESIDE laird was out shooting one day, accompanied by his gamekeeper. Excelling as a *litterateur*, the laird was a desperately poor shot, but his gamekeeper was an adept at framing excuses for his master's misses. Having fired a considerable number of shots to no purpose, a rabbit bounded out of a bush a few feet from where the laird was standing.

"Noo, sir, tak' time, and let her have it," said the gamekeeper.

Bang, bang. Two shots rang out, but still the rabbit maintained its onward course, and was soon out of sight.

"Confound it all," muttered the laird.

"Weel, sir," was the keeper's reply, "that brute must have had a deevilish thick hide." C. F.

Irish Again.

MRS. O'GRADY: "Good evening, Mrs. M'Ginnes, how is your husband to-day?"

Mrs. M'Ginnes: "Sure, and he's but poorly, thank goodness, and—oh, be jabers, there's the clock strikin', and I must go and wake him to give him his slapin' draught." E. L.

Smart Reply.

A SHORT time ago a boy fresh from school started work at a factory. Being late three successive mornings, he was discharged. The following morning the foreman was greatly surprised to find the boy at work, and going to him said: "I thought I told you not to come back."

"Yes," replied the boy, "and don't you do it again. I got a jolly good hiding when I told father."

E. R.

Rather Nasty.

A MAN who does not mind a joke at his own expense says he went into a chemist's recently, and asked for some morphine. The assistant objected to giving it without a prescription.

"Do I look like a man who would kill himself?" the customer asked.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said the assistant, "but if I looked like you I should be tempted."

C. R. F.

A True Bill.

"IF you were a—a jury, Clara," said the embarrassed young lawyer, hesitatingly, "I could plead my cause with more self-possession. In the courts of—er—of love I don't think I can claim to be a first class advocate."

"Perhaps you have not had an extensive practice in such courts, William," suggested the maiden, softly.

"That's it, exactly, Clara," eagerly rejoined the young man, moving his chair a little nearer. "I'm a new hand at this business. But if I could feel sure the jury——"

"Yes."

"Wasn't prejudiced against the advocate——"

"Yes."

"Why, then, I might——"

"What kind of a jury do you consider me, William?" she asked with eyes downcast.

"A—h'm—common jury, of course. You couldn't be a grand jury, you know, darl——"

"Why not?"

"Because I don't plead before grand juries."

"I think, William," said the young girl, blushing, "I would rather for this occasion be considered a grand jury."

"Why?"

"Because," and she hid her face somewhere in the vicinity of his coat-collar, "I have found a 'true Bill!'" J. J. McC.

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A VICTIM OF VERBOSITY.

Too well I know the awful truth. For weeks I have been an object of commiseration to my friends, and the burden of my life has well-nigh pressed down my sinking frame. Reason is tottering on her throne, but ere she is finally and possibly for ever unseated and I descend into the black and awful darkness of drivelling idiocy, or maybe, raving insanity, let me endeavour to state for the benefit of my contemporaries and successors, the circumstances which have reduced me to this deplorable condition.

Until a comparatively short time ago I could as fairly and confidently claim to be "clothed and in my right mind," as any man, and would have defied each and every member of the Lunacy Board, individually and collectively to have found the slightest trace of a disturbance of my mental equilibrium. Now, alas! I have been weighed in the balances and found wanting, and if, when my beclouded life has reached its termination there should be any among my legatees who may consider themselves aggrieved by the smallness of the portion of this world's goods, which my last will and testament directs shall be apportioned unto them, I can with confidence look forward to the Courts being called upon to decide whether the testator—my unfortunate self—was in a condition, when that document was drafted, to properly dispose of the property therein named.

Having thus, in the foregoing preamble, endeavoured to state with all lucidity of expression remaining at my command, my present condition, I will now proceed to explain the reason of the catastrophe which has come upon me with overwhelming force.

But if the succeeding narrative should be marred by vagueness of term and mediocrity of expression, I beg that my readers will make every allowance which a sympathetic nature would prompt in view of the circumstances under which the recital of my misfortunes is penned, and that, even though the narrative may come under their condemnation, they will yet spare a pitying thought and a kindly word for the victim who in sending out this narrative to the world writes "Finis" to his labours and whose only wish is to thenceforward sink into oblivion and forgetfulness.

Now to my story.

I am as yet only in the heyday of my youth and had looked forward to a happy and possibly prosperous career, ending in a ripe old age amongst my friends. It is not necessary for the purposes of this story that I should weary my readers with the details of my life in its earlier periods. These were commonplace and uneventful and can therefore be at once dismissed. I had ambitions in a certain direction.

I was desirous of achieving fame and possibly fortune in the world of literature and with this end in view I commenced work upon a book, which I fondly hoped would at least [illegible]

tion. I gave much anxious thought and care to this work.

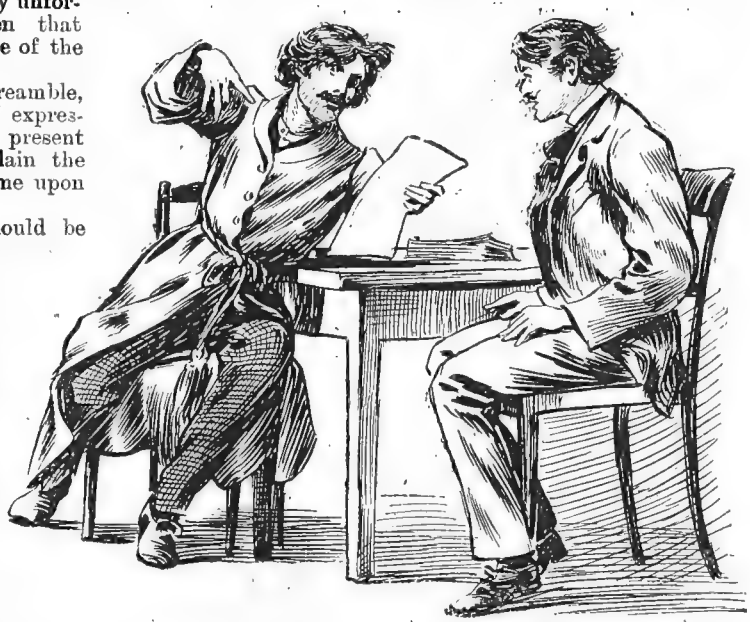
Page after page I wrote, chapter after chapter was concluded.

Early and late I racked my brain in order to clothe my characters in suitable dress.

Many and many were the pages of manuscript which I penned only to destroy. At times I despaired of even being able to bring my labours to a satisfactory conclusion, but I stuck doggedly to my purpose, until at last the arduous task was completed and I looked with pride upon the finished creation of my brain.

At this juncture a friend—I still call him such, for I am loath to believe that it was with malice prepense that he acted—introduced me to an individual whom he described as a brother *litterateur*, thus pandering to my vanity.

Though my work had not as yet received the seal of approbation from the stern critics who sit in the seat of the literary judgement hall, though my manuscript had not even been submitted to a single publisher, I had unbound confidence in the merits of my production and its ultimate success. Consequently it was only natural that before I had been long in the company of this individual that I should modestly hint that I had written a story, and that I should esteem myself very highly favoured if my more experienced brother would do me the honour of reading and criticising my production.



"What you require is diction, my young friend, diction!"

Here, in a nutshell, lies the story of my undoing. If

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requested criticism, if he had even hurt my pride by hinting that he could not afford to waste his time over the crude effusions of inexperienced literary aspirants, the story of my life would not have contained the gloomy pages which I now inscribe. But, unfortunately, when my request was preferred Mr. Ellison most graciously—at least, so it then appeared to me—expressed his willingness to give me the benefit of his matured experience, and from that moment I felt that the success of my story was a foregone conclusion.

Though the incident may appear to the average reader somewhat commonplace, I cannot refrain from retailing it as showing what manner of man the Fates had brought me in contact with. As is well know it is a thoroughly English custom when men meet for the first time, and indulge in a few minutes' conversation, for them to further cement the acquaintance by an adjournment to some neighbouring hostelry. In due observance of this time-honoured custom I made the usual suggestion.

"Will you come and have a drink?" said I.

Mr. Ellison's reply was, as I subsequently ascertained to my cost, characteristic of the man.

"My young friend," he replied, "although I am an individual who is singularly, if not conspicuously abstemious in the matter of alcoholic refreshment, and have an extreme abhorrence of the undue indulgence of the bibulous inclinations, yet I am distinctly of opinion that the present meeting is of a sufficiently auspicious nature as to justify me in quaffing a goblet of the inebriating fluid. Therefore, it is with extreme pleasure that I shall accept the invitation so genially extended to me, and shall now propose an adjournment to the Bacchanalian resort, where we will drink to your ultimate and enduring success, coupling with it the hope that when you have climbed the giddy heights and stand on the topmost pinnacle of the temple of Fame, you will not be overcome by the altitude to which you have attained."

This lengthy speech in response to a simple invitation appealed strongly to my sense of the ridiculous, and I had some difficulty in controlling my risible faculties, but as I had no wish to offend my new acquaintance I repressed my merriment.

The following day, by arrangement with the gentleman who had thus become my literary adviser, I took my precious manuscript round to his residence and was desired by him to call upon him a week later. Ere I left his abode he put several questions to me.

"Before I enter upon the perusal of your maiden effort, my young friend," he said, "let me ask you whether you really desire a fair and honest criticism irrespective of what the result may be."

"Most certainly I do," I replied.

"Very well. I can assure you I shall be neither hypercritical nor censorious. If your work merits condemnation I shall make my pronouncement as unhesitatingly and plainly as I should were it the reverse, though it would give me infinitely more pleasure to eulogise than to condemn. In either case, however, it will be in your own interests that I should speak."

I warmly thanked Mr. Ellison and withdrew with a greatly enhanced admiration for him. Seven days later I called with some trepidation to hear sentence pronounced.

When I was shown into my friend's study I found him seated with my manuscript in front of him.

"You will observe that I am in readiness for your visit, my young friend," he remarked, "I am rejoiced to find that you have apparently inculcated the virtue of punctuality. My pet aversion is the person who in failing to keep his engagement at the time appointed, thereby encroaches on my time, and thus, as time is money, deprives me of a certain proportion of the currency of the realm. Now to the consideration of your work."

I set to work to remodel it.

"What is your decision concerning it?" I asked eagerly.

"Steady, my young friend, steady. We must proceed to the consideration of this subject with patience and deliberation."

Curbing my impatience as well as I could I waited for the verdict, in the meantime endeavouring to gain some idea as to whether the criticism I was about to receive was adverse or favourable, from Mr. Ellison's face, but his countenance was as impassive and inscrutable as a sphinx. At last the oracle spoke:

"After carefully and conscientiously perusing the work which you submitted to me I have come to the conclusion that you are endowed with considerable literary ability."

A gratified smile overspread my face, which, unlike my mentor's countenance, was very much of an open book, which he easily read, as his following remarks indicated.

"I am glad that I am able, in communicating my decision, to preface the detailed criticism with a general expression which is of such a nature as to give you some pleasure, as it will subsequently be my duty—you will observe I use the word duty, for I am conscientiously directed in these matters—to say certain things which may give you pain, though I trust you will treat my words as you would the surgeon's knife which inflicts a momentary punishment in order to

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remove the danger of serious complications and possibly a fatal termination."

"I am quite sure I shall take your criticism in the spirit in which it is given," I replied.

"Well spoken, my young friend," he exclaimed. "Had I discovered in you any indication of resentment prompted by wounded vanity my interest in you would have evaporated, and I should, without any compunction, have abandoned you to your flounderings in the whirlpool of folly, even though it might result in your eventually being engulfed in the vortex of an overweening confidence and unreasoning vanity."

I began to wonder when the real business upon which we were met would be reached, for to tell the truth, my patience was getting exhausted and my friend's long speeches were beginning to weary me. At last to my intense relief he approached the subject.

"In the first place, I can heartily congratulate you on the conception of your plot. It is most daringly and ingeniously contrived and is highly creditable to your inventive genius. It bristles with originality which is, of course, highly commendable. The grouping of your characters is also good. Thus far, I have only referred to the qualities which would recommend your work. Now I come to the defects. Though your plot and the grouping of your characters, are, as I have said, good, yet there is one point which would effectually damn your story in the eyes of the public, were it permitted to get into circulation in its present form. I am afraid it will be necessary to entirely rewrite the book before you can with any degree of confidence submit it to any publisher. What you require is diction, my young friend, diction," and as he spoke he brought his hand down on his desk heavily as though to emphasise his remark.

"Your language is at present commonplace. Your dialogue is lacking in pungency. You must make it more piquant and pleasing. You must crystallise your ideas and stamp your characters with individuality, but above all you must express yourself forcibly. I repeat, what you require is diction. For instance take this paragraph," and as he spoke he turned over the leaves of the manuscript. "Now, listen while I read it to you and then I will read you a paraphrase of that paragraph. Here is your wording," and he commenced to read.

"Ella Godfrey was the first to descend to the breakfast room and she passed the time of waiting for the other members of the family in watching the falling snow, which, during the night, had effected a transformation. As yet the snow was untrodden and Ella thought how beautiful it looked and sighed almost regretfully at the idea of its being converted into dirt and slush. 'How like the lives of many of our unfortunate fellow creatures,' she soliloquised. She was prevented from moralising further by the entry of the other members of the family, and in a few minutes the clatter of crockery and the jingle of the other table requisites showed that breakfast was being discussed.

"Now my object in selecting this particular paragraph is because it is one of the simplest and least important in the book. In fact it could be eliminated without detracting from the narrative. But this same paragraph well handled can be made the basis of a splendid moral lesson and become forcible and brilliant. I have rewritten it on a separate sheet. Here it is.

"On the following morning the first to break the spell of somnolence was Ella Godfrey. With celerity and dexterity she completed her preparations and descended to the breakfast room to await the arrival of those who were still wooing the drowsy god. During the time the thick mantle of darkness had enshrouded the earth, its face had undergone a complete transformation and Ella looked forth upon a pure white, gleaming and glistening expanse of country. The feathery crystals were still descending, and as yet they had not been despoiled of their pristine purity by the foot of man. As the fair girl's gaze rested upon the scene, and she meditated on its probable appearance in the course of but a few fleeting hours she started a train of thought. 'How like the lives of many of our fellow mortals,' she mused. 'Now the fleecy covering presents a most attractive appearance and I can find myself in entire sympathy with the writer from whose pen we received that simple, yet grand poem commencing, "Snow, snow, beautiful snow," but ere long the attractiveness and the purity will have departed, leaving only a mire, repulsive in its aspect. Thus many a wrecked life, many a degraded soul, many a sunken wretch, has once possessed the attributes which go to make up the pure, noble and dignified image of the great

I was fairly staggered by this pronouncement.

Creator, but by contact with the impure, the ignoble and the debased, has lost all that life made attractive and beautiful.' Ella's reveries were disturbed at this point by the entry of the less energetic members of the family circle, and ere long the delayed meal was in progress."

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There is no need to weary my readers with further details. Suffice it to say that my manuscript was literally torn to shreds in this fashion. I took it home again and immediately set to work to remodel it in accordance with the suggestions of my friend.

It was a herculean task and involved much anxious thought and much weariness of mind, but at last it was completed.

There was no opportunity of again submitting it for criticism to Mr. Ellison, as he was abroad, so I despatched it to a publishing firm.

During the period of waiting—and it was a fairly long one—I endeavoured to cultivate the style of expression which characterised the rewritten manuscript, with the object of improving my diction.

The simplicity which had previously characterised my conversation and writing gradually vanished to such extremes did I go, that I sincerely believe that during that period no friend ever received a written communication from me without having to apply to his dictionary for assistance in arriving at my meaning.

In ordinary converse I plumed myself upon the fact—for such I supposed it to be—that I was in a fair way for establishing a reputation as a brilliant conversationalist.

I have subsequently learned that I was looked upon by my long-suffering friends as a most intolerable bore, who was endeavouring to establish a record in the use of unnecessarily lengthy words.

* * * * *

At last the verdict of the publishers was pronounced upon my work. It came in the form of a letter with which my manuscript was enclosed. I think I cannot do better than give the letter in full. It was as follows:

> Dear Sir,—We have read your story, which bears marks of decided literary talent. Your plot is an excellent one and you have shown some discrimination in the selection of your characters, but we cannot accept it in its present form. We do not wish to hurt your feelings, but rather to assist you, if possible, as we are of opinion that you can do much better than this. Were you to re-write your story in plain, simple language, instead of employing the grandiloquent expressions and exaggerated phraseology, which now make it appear stilted and unnatural, we are of opinion that it would have a fair chance of success. If you care to adopt our suggestion and again send it on to us, we shall be pleased to give it further consideration— Yours faithfully,
>
> Watkins, Mills and Hampson.

I was fairly staggered by this pronouncement, but as I was naturally anxious to get my work published, I at once decided that if Messrs Watkins, Mills and Hampson preferred the simple style, I would proceed with the revision with the utmost despatch. Accordingly I began, but it was all of no use. Like King Charles's head in Mr. Dick's narrative the exaggerated phrase would creep in.

For weeks I endeavoured to revert to the former style, but it was all of no avail, until now my friends say my condition is so serious that it is absolutely necessary that I should be taken where I can have perfect rest and quiet.

I understand them perfectly.

The light of reason is not finally extinguished and I know, from hints which they have let drop, that they contemplate placing me in a private asylum in order that I may have the benefit of a celebrated brain specialist's treatment.

* * * * *

Poor Charlie! we parted with him yesterday, and it now devolves upon me, as his most intimate chum, to complete the narrative he began. We had all been greatly interested in the book which he was writing and looked forward to its ultimate publication.

All went well up to a certain point and I thoroughly believe that had it not been for what turned out to be a most disastrous meeting, his book would have been a success.

Just when he had completed it he was introduced to another literary man, whom, I am grateful to be able to say I have never met, and whom I hope I never shall meet. This man was evidently cursed with—if I may use the expression—a strong weakness.

I have since heard it said of him that he could and did use more words of six syllables than any other man breathing.

Upon that I am, of course, unable to speak with any degree of definiteness, but I do know that poor Charlie's trouble dates almost from the time he made Mr. Ellison's acquaintance. It was after an interview with this man Ellison, that he came home and commenced to re-write his manuscript in language which was perfectly absurd in its verbosity, and those of us who were permitted to see it from time to time were unanimously of opinion that it was foredoomed to failure, and subsequent events only proved too truly the correctness of our prognostications.

When we attempted to remonstrate with him on the subject he simply informed us that our ignorance of the requirements of modern fiction alone excused our interference.

"It's diction, Fred, my boy, diction that provides the element of success in present day literature," he once said to me.

And diction was his undoing. From being one of the most entertaining of men he became a most intolerable bore and a laughing stock to his friends because of the extravagance of his speech, which he would inflict upon us in his endeavours to extend his vocabulary.

As we all anticipated, his work was rejected. This was a heavy blow to him, and in his endeavours to correct it he worked so feverishly and made such enormous demands upon his reserve of strength and his mental faculties that eventually his brain gave way and it became necessary to place him in a private asylum. His case is not looked upon as hopeless, but for the present there he remains a victim of verbosity.

J. P.

?

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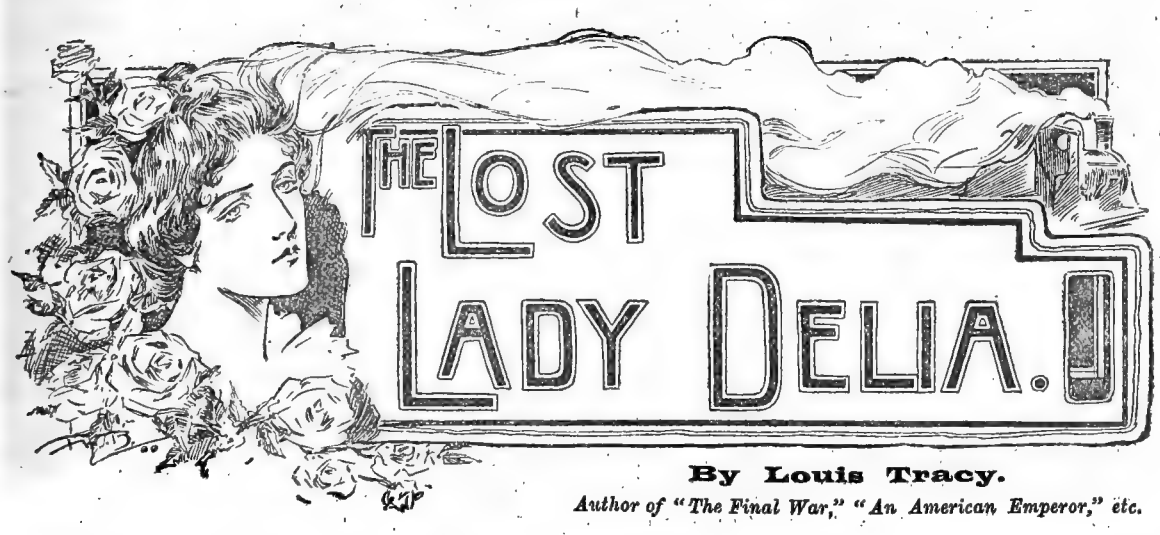

By Louis Tracy.

Author of "The Final War," "An American Emperor," etc.

THIS TELLS THE STORY FROM THE START.

LADY DELIA LYLE leaves her house one foggy November afternoon, saying she is going to see her sister at Richmond, but from that time she is not heard of.

Her husband, Sir Charles Lyle, puts the matter into the hands of detectives, Inspector Winter taking charge of the case.

Reginald Brett, a barrister friend of the Lyles, also promises to do all he can, and he finds out that Lady Delia, on the night of her disappearance, instead of going to Richmond, alighted at Sloane Square, and went to a block of flats called Raleigh Mansions.

Towards the end of the month the body of a woman, evidently murdered, is found wedged beneath a drain-pipe in the Thames at Putney, and, though Sir Charles does not identify the body, Brett imagines it to be that of Lady Delia. Shortly after this discovery Lady Delia's maid, Jane Harding, disappears. She is afterwards found to have gone on the stage.

Brett now starts investigations at Raleigh Mansions, and he fixes on two residents there as being likely to have been connected with Lady Delia. These are a Mr. Sydney H. Pyne, who is not at present in residence, and a Mrs. Hillmer, whom he finds to be Pyne's sister.

It had transpired that Pyne had gone to Monte Carlo, and thither Brett goes, and he discovers that though letters are addressed to Pyne at the Hotel du Cercle he is not known there.

During his stay at Monte Carlo Brett becomes acquainted with an Englishman, named Albert Mensmore, whom he helps out of some money difficulties, but he does not discover anything about Pyne.

After his return Brett finds out that Sir Charles Lyle knows Albert Mensmore, but in what connection does not transpire.

A few days later Brett goes into the City, to the office of Dodge and Co., with whom he had had some speculative dealings, and from remarks made by Mr. Dodge, he thinks that Pyne and Mensmore must be one and the same man. In the evening Brett and Winter go to Raleigh Mansions and search the flat occupied by Pyne. Brett finds that a piece of one of the fire-dogs is missing, and that it exactly corresponds with the piece of iron which was found imbedded in the head of the body found at Putney.

He again visits Mrs. Hillmer, who is terrified by his inquiries, and this seems to strengthen suspicion against her brother.

It is shown by this time that Mensmore (who is at Genoa) had previously adopted the name of Pyne. The real Pyne (his mining partner) writes him that their property is likely to bring them much wealth.

CHAPTER XVIII. *(continued).*

THERE was quite a large gathering for dinner. Places like Genoa contain a number of highly-interesting personages if the visitor can only get to know them. The British race produces a richer variety of human flotsam and jetsam than any other. These derelicts come to anchor in out-of-the-way parts of the earth. They seem to have been everywhere and have done everything, whilst the whole world is an open book to them.

Thus there was no lack of variety in the conversation, and, as usual in such assemblies, it dealt more with persons than with incidents.

Phyllis had arranged the guests, so it may be taken for granted that her lover was near her—in fact, he sat exactly opposite. The lady he took in to dinner was the wife of an English doctor, and the British consul at the port was Miss Browne's table companion.

The consul was a chatty man, who kept himself well informed concerning society events.

"By the way," he said to Phyllis, "did you ever meet Lady Delia Lyle?"

"No, her name is not familiar to me."

"Do you mean the wife of Sir Charles Lyle?" said Mensmore; and the sudden interest he evinced caused Phyllis to glance at him wonderingly.

"Yes that is she."

"I know Sir Charles well. What is there new about his wife?"

"She is dead."

"Good Heavens! Dead! When, and how?"

Mensmore was so obviously agitated that others present noticed it, and Phyllis marvelled much that in all their confidences the name of Lyle had never escaped his lips.

The consul, too, was a little upset by the sensation caused by his words.

"I fear," he said, "that I have blurted out the fact rather unguardedly. The Lyles are friends of yours?"

"No, no, not in that sense. Sir Charles I have known for many years. But are you sure his wife is dead?"

"My authority is an announcement in the *Times*, to hand by to-day's post. I should not have mentioned it were not Lady Delia so well known in society, and the affair is peculiar, to say the least."

"Peculiar—how?"

In his all-absorbing interest at the consul's statement, Mensmore paid no heed to the curious looks directed at him by those near, for he had become very pale, and was more excited in manner than the circumstances appeared to warrant.

"In this sense. The paper is the issue of January 28, yet the notice says that Lady Delia died on November 6. That is odd, is it not? A woman of her position could hardly have quitted life so quietly that no one would trouble to publish the fact for nearly three months after the event."

"It is extraordinary—inexplicable?"

"Did you know Lady Delia personally, Bertie?" put in Phyllis timorously.

The question restored Mensmore to some sense of his surroundings.

"I have never even seen her," he said, trying desperately to be commonplace; "but her husband is an old schoolfellow of mine, and I have heard much of both of them since their marriage. I am quite shocked by the news."

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"I can only repeat my regret for having spoken of it so carelessly," said the polite consul.

"Oh, I am glad to know of it since it has happened. Poor Lady Delia! How strange that she should die."

Phyllis had the tact to change the conversation, and Mensmore gradually recovered his self-possession. A woman's eyes are keener than a man often gives her credit for; and Phyllis could see quite well that after the first effect of the news had passed, it, in some indefinable way, seemed to have a good effect on her lover. But if a woman's intuition is seldom at fault her reasoning faculties are narrow.

Trying to arrive at a solution of the mystery attending Mensmore's behaviour, Phyllis suddenly became hot all over.

She felt furiously and inordinately jealous of a woman she had never seen, and who was admittedly dead before Mensmore and she herself had met.

Hence her nose went high in the air when Bertie claimed her for the first dance.

"Who is this Lady Delia in whom you are so deeply interested?" she said, pulling him off beneath a sheltering awning.

"As I said," replied Mensmore, "she is the wife of an old acquaintance of mine."

"But you must have been very fond of her to feel so keenly when you heard of her death?"

"Fond of her! I have never, to my knowledge, laid eyes on her."

"Oh!" and the tone was somewhat mollified. "Then why did you look so worried during dinner?"

"Simply because I know Sir Charles."

"What a dear sympathetic little boy you are! When I die, Bertie, I suppose you will drop down stiff from grief at once."

"Don't talk nonsense. We are missing all this delightful music."

And they whirled off down the snowy deck, forgetful of all things save one, that they were in love.

Now, what a pity it was that Brett did not happen to be on board the *White Heather* that night.

Many complications, and not a little misery, would have been avoided thereby.

CHAPTER XIX.

Where Mrs. Hillmer Went.

Sir Charles Lyle, in sending off the hurried announcement of his wife's death, forgot the "society" papers.

Such a promising topic did not come in their way every week, and they made the most of it. Where did Lady Delia die? when did she die? under what circumstances did she die? They rolled the morsel under their tongues in every conceivable manner.

Details were not forthcoming.

"Our representative" called at Wensley House, Portman Square, but was informed that Sir Charles was in Yorkshire. Inquiry by a local reporter from Sir Charles in person elicited no information. "Lady Delia is dead," wrote this enterprising journalist; "of that there can be no manner of doubt, but her husband states that for family reasons he is unable to supply the public with the precise facts concerning his wife's demise."

This ill-advised authentic statement only fanned the flame. An evening journal got hold of the proceedings at the Putney Coroner's-court which inquired into the death of the woman found in the Thames, and, with a portentous display of headlines, published interviews with the doctor giving particulars of the iron spike found imbedded in the skull.

The paper was also able to state "on the best authority" that at this inquest Sir Charles Lyle and the missing lady's personal maid were called in to identify the body but failed.

A first-class sensation was in full swing and threatened to reach the question stage in the House of Commons when Brett took hold of affairs.

He went to Sir Charles Lyle's solicitors, and induced them to send out the following authoritative communiqué to the Press:

Much unnecessary pain is being caused to Sir Charles Lyle and to the relatives of his late wife by the comments which have appeared in many newspapers regarding Lady Delia Lyle's death. Her ladyship left her home on November 6th to pay a visit to her sister at Richmond, and since that date has not been seen or heard of. There was no possible reason for Lady Delia's disappearance. After a long and agonising search, her husband and relatives have come to the conclusion that she met with some accident on the date named, with the result that her identity was not established and she was probably buried from some hospital or other institution long before her friends seriously entertained the thought that she was dead. Every such case of accidental death followed by the interment of unknown persons by the authorities, occuring on or about November 6th, has since been rigidly investigated, but no definite trace has been found of the missing lady. Sir Charles Lyle finally determined to take the public step of announcing his wife's death in the hope that any hitherto undiscovered clue might thereby come to light. But there are no grounds to suppose that any other explanation of the occurrence than that given will be forthcoming. The investigation has throughout been in the hands of Scotland Yard, so no good purpose can be served by further discussion in the Press of what is now, and threatens to remain, a mystery rendered more complex probably by the simplicity of its leading features.

Several newspapers, of course, pointed out that they were helping forward the inquiry by noising it abroad, but thenceforth the paragraphs ceased, being eclipsed in interest by the revelations of a great divorce case in which there were no less than six titled co-respondents.

One man was much puzzled by the original obituary notice and the semi-official statement supplied by the solicitors.

Mr. Winter did not know what to make of them. He guessed that Brett had inspired the "explanation," and he read many times the final sentence.

"It threatens to remain a mystery, does it?" he murmured. "Just wait, Mr. Brett, until I lay my hands on Pyne. Clever as you are, I think I will show you that Scotland Yard can occasionally get the better of your theories. Anyhow, Pyne will have to be very explicit about his movements before I am satisfied that he knows nothing about this business."

He had written to the Chief of Police at New York, and something definite would soon come to hand.

Nevertheless, he felt somewhat shaken in his diagnosis of the crime. Wyoming was a long way from London, and the letter from Pyne, which he had in his possession, did not exactly confirm his suspicion that this man was concerned in the murder of Lady Delia.

He quickly became aware of Mrs. Hillmer's departure, and at once jumped to the conclusion that she had recently left England for the United States.

A close scrutiny of the passage lists at Liverpool and Southampton did not help him much, and he ultimately resolved to call on Brett, in the hope that a chance exclamation might reveal the barrister's opinion of the situation.

Reggie was not at a loss to account for Mr. Winter's presence.

"I expected you," he said.

"Really now, may I ask why, sir?"

"Because you have missed Mrs. Hillmer, and you want me to help you to find out where she has gone, and why."

The detective smiled.

"I won't say that you are wrong, sir," he cried. "In these affairs it is always well to keep an eye on the woman, you know."

"When did Mrs. Hillmer leave Raleigh Mansions?"

"On the 30th."

"It is now February 3. Four days ago, eh?"

"That's the time. She might have left by the American line from Southampton or the Cunard from Liverpool on Wednesday, but she did not, and no one answering to her description is booked by the White Star to-morrow."

"Southampton! Liverpool! Do you think she has gone to America?"

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"Where else? She's in league with Pyne, somehow, of that I am certain, and I think that the Monte Carlo address for the letters was a mere blind—a clever one, too, as it even deceived you, Mr. Brett."

"Yes. It did deceive me."

"Then why are you so surprised at the suggestion that the lady should attempt to cross the Atlantic?"

"Because I have not your rapid perception of the points of a case."

"That's your way of pulling my leg, Mr. Brett."

The barrister smiled.

Mrs Hillmer, of course, had gone to Monte Carlo. Once there she would not have much difficulty in tracing the *White Heather*, and overtaking Mensmore.

She would warn him of the police pursuit, and there would be a scene between them.

How would it result? Would Mensmore, guilty, seek safety in flight? Would he, innocent, return to London and demand to be confronted with his accusers?

For the life of him, Brett could not say positively. Yet he felt that the situation was too delicate to be dealt with by Mr. Winter's bludgeon methods, and he forbore to speak.

The detective interpreted his silence as an admission of inability to find a satisfactory explanation of Mrs. Hillmer's absence.

He went on:

"Pyne is not at Monte Carlo."

"So I imagined."

"Well, it is a fact. The police have made constant inquiries for him at the Hotel du Cercle and elsewhere. Not the slightest trace of him can be found."

"I was there myself, you know."

"Yes, sir. I have not forgotten that. But it shows what a clever rascal the fellow is in concealing his identity. However, he could never have counted upon my discovering that letter of his. Even if he is not in America we shall get some reliable data to go upon in answer to my queries."

"There I fully agree with you. You will have done a great deal if you thoroughly clear up the mystery regarding Pyne. May I ask you to let me know the result?"

"With pleasure, sir. And now, can I request a favour in return?"

"Certainly."

"Tell me, then, what is, in your opinion, the best way to find Mrs. Hillmer?"

Brett did not expect to be thus openly challenged on the matter. It was one thing to withhold his own theories and discoveries from this representative of the majesty of the law, but quite another to refuse to help forward a detective with whom he was nominally working.

Besides, Mrs. Hillmer had four days start. It would take some time—possibly a telegram would not be sufficiently explicit—to obtain the desired assistance from the Continental police. Yes, in this instance Mensmore must take his chance.

"If I were you," said Brett, slowly weighing his words, "I would inquire at the Continental booking-offices at Victoria and Charing Cross, and from the guards in charge of the morning mail trains on the 30th. In fact, it would be quite safe for you to wire the authorities at Monte Carlo, asking if Mrs. Hillmer is not now at the Hotel du Cercle."

The detective started as though he had been shot.

"What!" he cried, "you think she is there all the time?"

"I think she has been there since Wednesday morning."

"That's what I mean. Why did you not tell me sooner?"

"Because you never asked me. And now, Mr. Winter, one word of advice. Go slow."

"It's all jolly fine telling me to go slow when I have no

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reason to go fast. The case even against Pyne is shadowy enough at present."

"Exactly. Wait until you can grasp a substance."

"I will, sir," said Winter, jamming his hat on; "but when I lay my hands on Pyne I will grip him hard enough."

It took Mr. Winter all that day to satisfy himself that Mrs. Hillmer had really booked for the Riviera by the Club-train from Charing Cross on the preceding Monday.

Just as he had verified the fact, came a reply from the Monte Carlo police:

Mrs. Hillmer arrived at Hotel du Cercle on Wednesday. Left for Italy same afternoon. Shall we endeavour to trace her?

"Oh, bother," growled Mr. Winter. "Pyne may be in Jerusalem by this time. And here have I been fussing about Wyoming or some other potato patch in the Far West."

However, he wired again to Monte Carlo.

Yes. Locate Mrs. Hillmer, if possible. I will then telegraph instructions to local police.

When this message had gone he felt easier in his mind. The chase was at least getting warm.

"I cannot arrest him yet," he reflected; "but if I once get fairly on his track, I will not lose sight of him again if I can help it. I suppose it will mean a trip to Italy for me. I must lay the evidence before the Treasury to see if a warrant is justified."

Two days passed without incident.

Late on Sunday evening, February 5th, a continental telegram was handed to him at Scotland Yard.

Mrs. Hillmer's present address, Hotel Imperiale, Florence.

He promptly wired the chief of police at Florence:

Keep Mrs. Hillmer, English visitor, Hotel Imperiale, under surveillance. Also watch her associates, particularly Englishman named Pyne, if there. Letter follows.

"That's a good stroke of business," said Mr. Winter when the message had gone. "Now we shan't be long."

It was in quite a contented mood that he lit a cigar on the steps of his office, and prepared to start home for dinner but a messenger with the badge of the Commercial Cable Company in Northumberland Avenue bustled past him.

"Who's the cable for, boy?" said the detective.

"Winter, Scotland Yard," was the answer.

"That's me."

He tore open the envelope and found that the contents were coded, but he caught the word "Pyne" amidst the unintelligible jumble.

With considerable display of excitement he rushed into the office to find the A.B.C. Code, and after some confusion in deciphering the words, this was what he read:

Regret delay in replying to your communication. Pyne left New York in *White Star* steamer due Liverpool February 4th.

"February 4th? Why, that's yesterday. Good gracious, he's here all the time. Well of all the——"

But exclamations were useless. Calling another plain-clothes man to accompany him, Mr. Winter drove off in mad haste to Sloane Square.

About an hour later Brett received a typewritten slip gummed on to a telegraph form. It was from Florence and ran as follows:

My brother wildly excited regarding allegations. We start for London to-night. Meanwhile fearful complications expected. Mr. Pyne of Wyoming, my brother's friend, is probably occupying his flat, and may be arrested. We both trust to you to save him. Wire us at Modane or Gare du Nord. Gwendoline Hillmer.

So Brett also rushed off in a hansom to Sloane Square.

CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Sydney H. Pyne.

Mr. Winter glanced at Brett's chambers whilst passing through Victoria Street.

"I wonder what he would think if he knew what we are after," he said to his colleague, one of the two who accompanied him when Brett was arrested by mistake.

"What are we after?" said the policeman.

"This time we're going to nail the right Pyne," was the answer.

"Will we cart him off?"

"Well, now, that depends. I think I am quite right in collaring him unless he explains things to my satisfaction, which is hardly likely."

"The charge is one of murder, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Who did he kill?"

"Well, up to now it hasn't come out for the sake of the family. But if Pyne is here you will know soon enough."

"It's a funny way to go to work."

"Commissioner's orders, my boy. I am not to reveal the la—the name until it cannot be helped. However, as I have said so much I don't mind telling you it's a woman, and a big one too."

"Big! Fat, do you mean?"

"No. A woman of high position."

"Phew. A regular society scandal, I suppose."

"That's about the size of it."

On arrival at Sloane-square they quickly ascended to No. 12 Raleigh Mansions.

A stout, elderly woman answered their knock, and a glance at her face revealed the map of Ireland, although her name was Saxon Robinson.

"Mr. Pyne in?" said Winter.

"Faith, he's not."

"Then where is he?"

"I don't know, mister; an' if I did I wouldn't be afther telling when axed in an oncivil manner."

"All right, Mrs. ——"

"Robinson's my name, if that's any use to ye."

"Very well, Mrs. Robinson. We want to have a word with Mr. Pyne, and we will be much obliged to you if you can tell us when he is likely to return, if he is in London."

"Arrah, it's meself is mixed entirely about him. But *this* Mr. Pyne is in London right enough, and is comin' in to dinner in half-an-hour, so by yer leave I'll just go on wid me wurruk."

"May we come in and wait for him? We wish particularly to see him."

Mrs. Robinson surveyed them suspiciously, but seemingly decided in their favour.

"Stip in her, gintlemen both," she said, and conducted them to the sitting-room.

A fire now burned brightly in the grate, where Brett had made his pregnant discovery. The damaged bracket still stared at Winter, so to speak, but he saw it not.

Mrs. Robinson bustled about in the kitchen, and the two officers sat silent, waiting developments. Suddenly a thought occurred to Winter, and he went into the passage.

"Mrs. Robinson," he said, "what did you mean by referring to *this* Mr. Pyne?"

A quick step came bounding up the stairs, and a key rattled in the lock.

"You'd better ax him yerself," responded the housekeeper pithily, and the door opened to admit a handsome, well-knit man, tall and straight, with the clearly cut features of the true Westerner, and the easy carriage of one accustomed to the freedom of the prairie.

He was quietly dressed. The only sign that he was not a Londoner was given by his wide-awake felt hat, the last token of environment relinquished by a wandering citizen from the region of the Rockies. In the semi-darkness of the interior he could but dimly discern the form of the detective, standing behind the ready-tongued housekeeper.

"There's two gintlemen to see ye, Misther Pyne," said she.

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"Well, now, that's cu-rious," he answered, cheerfully. "I can only see one of you, but I'm glad to have you call, stranger, anyway; come right in. Are you sent by my friend to kinder cheer me up. I find this big city of yours a powerful sort of tonic after Wyoming. Come right in."

Mr. Winter was as greatly nonplussed by the new-comer's attitude as by his flow of language, carried on as it was in the balanced cadence of the American accent.

Within the drawing-room Pyne caught sight of the second detective. "Hallo! Here's the other one. Ve-ry glad to meet you both. Now, if you'll just tell me your names we'll get along straight away, as I guess you know mine all right."

The man was genuinely pleased at this unexpected visit. He smilingly pushed a box of cigars, green ones, towards them and helped himself to a weed.

"My name," said the detective, "is Inspector Winter, of Scotland Yard, and my friend here accompanies me officially."

"And hasn't he got a name?"

"Yes, but it doesn't matter."

"Well, if it doesn't matter, we won't quarrel. I guess you've got a message of some sort for me, else you wouldn't trouble to climb these stairs. Why don't you have e-le-vators in these big buildings?"

"As I said," began Mr. Winter, "we are from Scotland Yard."

"That's so. I've got that fixed O. K. Your name is I. Winter, from Scotland Yard. I don't know where Scotland Yard is, but we'll worry along without the geography of it."

"I am in the police. My title is Inspector. It is not my Christian name. Scotland Yard is the headquarters of the London police."

The American's eyes opened wide in wonder at this announcement, and a thought seemed suddenly to occur to him. But he said quietly:

"I'll figure it out better when you tell me why you've been good enough to call. And suppose we all sit down. I'm not used to stone pavements. I'm tired."

"Your name is Sydney H. Pyne?" said the detective severely, though he took a chair.

"So my people always told me."

"And you have occupied these chambers since August last?"

"Have I?"

"So I am informed."

"Get along with your story."

"You have just returned to England from Wyoming. The New York police cabled me that you arrived in Liverpool yesterday."

"Did they now? That was real cute of 'em."

"I want to ask you in the first instance, the exact date of your departure from this country?"

Before replying to the detective Pyne looked at him fixedly, as though he was trying to read what was passing in his mind.

At last he said, with a smile:

"Say, what are you after, Mr. Winter of Scotland Yard? What's the game? Who's been fooling you?"

"That is not the way to talk to me, sir. Answer my question fully and properly, or it may be worse for you."

"Jehosh. Have you come in to wipe the floor with me?"

"Are you going to reply to me or not?"

"I'm not going to speak square to any man who comes along and puts a thing like you do."

"Very well. I can get my information by other means. You leave me no alternative——"

Mr. Winter had half-risen and was about to add, "but to arest you," when with a rapidity known only to those accustomed to "draw" from boyhood, Pyne whipped a revolver from a hip pocket and covered the bridge of Winter's nose with the muzzle.

"Just you sit still, right there, Mr. Winter of Scotland Yard, or I will let daylight through you and your nameless

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friend if he interferes. You'd better believe me. By gad, I won't speak twice."

Neither Winter nor his companion were cowards. But they were quite helpless. They had not grappled with the circumstances with sufficient alertness, and they were utterly at this man's mercy. They were away from the door, and a table separated them from Pyne, whilst there was that in his eye which told them that he would shoot them dead if either of them moved. They had both sprung to their feet, and now glared at him impotently.

"Now, gentlemen," said Pyne, with the utmost coolness, "let me persuade you to sit down again and go on with your story, which interests me."

Winter was scarlet with indignation and annoyance.

"Let me tell you——," he roared.

"Sit down!"

"Make the best of it, Jim," murmured the other policeman; and the queer gathering resumed their seats.

"That's better," said Pyne, genially. "Now, we'll have a nice little chat. Am I correct in supposing that you were about to march me off to gaol, just now, when I spoilt the plant?"

"There's no use in resisting," growled Winter. "You cannot escape. If you have an atom of sense left you will come with us quietly, as it's all up with you."

"It looks like it," said Pyne, with a grim smile. "But if it's so bad a case as all that there's no desperate hurry, is there?"

"You're only making matters more difficult for yourself."

"Maybe. But as I happen to be a citizen of the United States I allow that I can't be whipped off to prison just because a silly fool like you thinks it's good for me. I've been a law-abiding man all my life, and I've lived in places where each man made his own law. If you can show good cause for your action I'll stand the racket. But at present I regard you as a blamed idiot."

The situation overcame the detective. He could only mutter:

"Time will show who's the idiot."

"I'm getting mighty hungry, Mr. Winter of Scotland Yard, and I've a kind of notion that the old lady is ready with the eatables. Will you be good enough to say what you're after?"

"I came here to ask you to account for your movements, and, failing a satisfactory explanation, to arrest you."

"On what charge?"

"For being concerned in the murder of Lady Delia Lyle, on or about November 6th last."

"Lady Delia Lyle!"

"Yes."

"Arrest *me!*"

"Yes."

"I placed you right away. You *are* a blamed idiot, Mr. Winter of Scotland Yard."

This repetition of his address goaded the detective almost beyond endurance.

"Now you know the charge," he shouted, "are you coming with us quietly, or——"

"Or what?"

The revolver still hovered across the table.

"Are we going to sit here all night?"

It was a weak conclusion, but to suggest an attack was sheer madness under the conditions.

"I guess not," was the calm answer. "I want my dinner, and I mean to have it."

"Very well. Eat your dinner, and have done with it."

"That's better. You and your friend shall join me. We'll have a nice little talk, and straighten out matters, which have got kinder mixed."

This was too much for Winter's associate. He burst out laughing.

"I allowed there was a joke in the deal, somewhere," went on Pyne; "but I haven't quite got the hang of it yet. Now, Mr. Winter of Scotland Yard, are you going to act like a reasonable man, or must I keep your nose in a line with my shooting-iron?"

Winter was saved from deciding which horn of the dilemma he would land on, for a sharp rat-tat at the door induced silence, and a moment later Brett's voice was heard inquiring: "Is Mr. Pyne in?"

"Faix, there may be half-a-dozen of him in by this time," cried Mrs. Robinson. "I dunno where I am, at all, at all. The gintlemen are in the parlour, sir."

And Brett entered.

In order to scientifically enfilade the newcomer, Pyne backed to the corner. Reggie glanced at the three, saw the revolver, and said with a comical air of relief:

"Thank goodness, nothing has happened. Put away your revolver, Mr. Pyne; you will not need it."

Although the barrister's manner differed considerably from the brusque methods adopted by Mr. Winter, the American remained on his guard. He said stiffly:

"You all seem to know me fairish well; but if you had the advantage of closer acquaintance, you would allow that I am not the man to be rushed on a confidence trick. If somebody doesn't explain quick I will lose my temper, and there will be trouble."

"I sympathise with you!" cried Brett. "But the first thing you must learn in this country is to keep dry cigars for your visitors. Our respective tastes differ in that respect."

"I guess I'll cotton on to you, stranger; but I'm tired holding this pistol."

"Put it away, then. I tell you it is not wanted. Winter, listen to me. You have hit upon the wrong man."

"Wrong man!" cried the detective, feeling more confident in the barrister's presence. "Why, I've had a cable about him from New York."

"Possibly; but you're mistaken, nevertheless. Mr. Pyne has not been within five thousand miles of England for years, possibly not in his life."

"Bully for you, stranger," broke in Pyne.

"Then who is the Mr. Sydney H. Pyne whom you believe, as well as I, to be the murderer of Lady Delia Lyle?"

"Steady, Winter. The last time I saw you I appealed to you to go slow. The man whom you want, simply because he happens to be the real occupant of these rooms, is at present travelling to London as fast as he can from Florence, and his sister, Mrs. Hillmer, is with him."

"Florence! Mrs. Hillmer!" gasped the policeman. "I've just arranged to have her watched there."

"Your arrangements, though admirable, are somewhat late in the day."

"Then what is her brother's name?"

"Herbert Mensmore. For some reason, hidden at this moment, he lived here under the name of the gentleman who has, I see, been giving you a practical lesson in the art of not jumping at conclusions."

"Have you known this long?"

"For some weeks."

"Then why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I have no definite reason for connecting Mensmore with Lady Delia's death. If I had, his action in returning to London the moment he hears of the charge would shake my belief."

"Who told him?"

"Mrs. Hillmer."

"Oh, this business is quite beyond me. I can't fathom it a little bit."

And Winter sank dejectedly to his chair again.

(To be continued.)

The Author of this story is writing "The Great Strike" in *Pearson's Weekly.*

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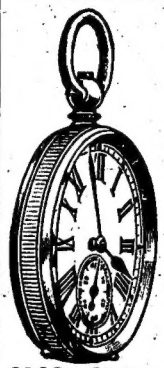

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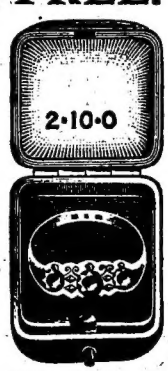

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"We have received some samples of the jewellery now being sold by the British Goldsmiths Co., the value of which is really wonderful considering the low prices asked for the goods. The British Goldsmiths Co. send out their goods to be sold by those who wish to put their spare time to good advantage. We should think there would be little difficulty about selling the goods we have before us. They are substantial, well finished, and cheap. The company offers a handsome present free to all persons selling a certain number of these articles."—HOME SWEET HOME, *Jan.* 5th., 1901.

BRITISH GOLDSMITHS CO. (DEPT. 29), 48 GRAY'S INN RD., LONDON.

Free

From the Antexema Co., 83 Castle Road, London, N.W., if this paper is named, a booklet on the Skin and a FREE SAMPLE of

"Antexema."

It is absolutely the most wonderful Skin Cure that has ever been discovered. It gives immediate relief from itching and burning and cures all skin diseases and every form of

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1/1½ bottles of chemists, post free for 1/3.

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

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Deliver in Truck Load. Prices on application.

Purveyors to The Licensed Victuallers by special appointment.

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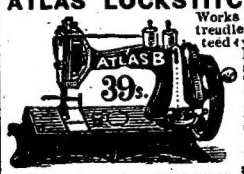

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine **39/-** To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for **ONE MONTH'S TRIAL.** Balance can be paid 5/- **Monthly.** Call or write for designs and Samples of work.

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500 40-EGG INCUBATORS.

Ladies and Gentlemen can greatly increase their incomes by **POULTRY BREEDING**, thus converting 1d. Eggs into 1s. Chickens. To encourage this industry we intend supplying each applicant during the next 28 days with one of our **40-Egg Incubators.**

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POST FREE THREE STAMPS

A Treatise on the Modern and Successful Treatment of Nervous Diseases and Exhaustion, by local absorption.

Fully up to the advanced ideas on the subject.

THE MARSTON CO.,
59 and 60 Chancery Lane, London, W.C.

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With a guarantee to keep correct time for three years, will be sent to any address on receipt of P.O. or stamps value 2/9 and three stamps extra for postage. To every purchaser during this month we give with it ABSOLUTELY FREE a strong Mexican SILVER CHAIN. All we ask of you is to show them to your friends, as by doing so you advertise our business.

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

IN future, dear readers, I am going to have a weekly chat with you. I have arrived at this resolve for various reasons. In the first place, it is an article of editorial faith with me that a feature of this kind tends to strengthen the bonds of friendship between readers and editor, and in the second, I have been much besought of late to establish such a page by readers themselves. "Such-and-such a paper has it, why not you?" they say in effect. And so for once departing from the programme of *Short Stories*, which is to lead and not to follow, I comply, with the greatest pleasure in the world, with the wishes of my many correspondents.

❦

WHAT are we going to chat about? Well, that depends to a great extent upon yourselves, for I shall look to you to assist me in this matter. I shall be happy to chat about whatever you please. Just what kind of subject that you might discuss with an old friend is what I mean. Perhaps you are anxious about some little point of everyday social conduct; maybe you are worried because the girl of your heart will flirt with "Charlie," or perhaps, reversing the case of sex, "Tom," or "Dick," or "Fred" may be unduly lethargic in the matter of "stating his intentions." In any such case, without intending to pose as an expert in etiquette, or setting up business as an amateur matrimonial agent, I still may be able to help you with a little commonsense advice and sympathy. So write to me.

❦

IDEAL MAN AND WOMAN COMPETITIONS.

A LITTLE while ago I offered a prize of two guineas for the best idea (by a lady) of an ideal man, and a similar prize for the best idea (by a man) of an ideal woman. The result has astounded me. Postcards have come in by the thousand from every part of the kingdom, and from all sorts of men and women. The task of selection and adjudication has been extremely difficult. My hair has grown visibly greyer during the process, and upon my breast is a feeling of dull despair, for I, personally, can never hope to attain the standard of excellence which is expected in a man by many of my lady readers.

"The flame-clear light of inviolable truth must shine from out his azure eyes. Chesnut curls must wave above his towering brow where the majesty of intellect sits." So runs one description of an ideal man. It almost makes one despair—or buy a hair restorer.

Many ladies have selected some popular hero as their ideal. Thus Earl Roberts, Lord Kitchener and Major General Baden-Powell, come in for much approbation.

* * * * *

PLEASING too, in these days of problem plays and cheap cynicism, is the fact that many ladies describe their husbands and sweethearts as their ideals, and I am proud to say that many of my own sex, not to be outdone in this respect, claim pre-eminence for the particular objects of their hearts.

Quite a prominent feature is the unanimity with which competitors of both sexes seem willing to forego mere physical charms for the more enduring qualities of the heart. Which, after all, is exceedingly comforting to some of us.

PRIZES of two guineas each have been awarded to Miss E. Douglas, 34 Holt Street, West Hartlepool, and Mr. L. F. Andrewes, Norella, Stenlvee, Blackheath, S.E., for the following:

MY IDEAL MAN.

THE qualities I would most desire in an ideal man would be chivalry and courage. Smart young people nowadays fancy chivalry a relic of the days when our grandmothers sat at home spinning, and cycles were unknown. Not at all. My ideal man is chivalrous to a fault. In the street he will give place to the weak; amongst his companions he will never indulge in cheap sneers and scoffs at the expense of women. It is always a safe index to a man's character—his estimate of women. But it is in his own home that you will find my ideal man at his best. He will be loving, kind and respectful to his mother, and helpful to his brother and sister. In short, he will be a gentleman. He will also possess courage—courage to tell the truth at all costs, courage to be honest, courage to say "No" and withstand temptation. And if he has courage to do these things he will not turn coward when physical danger, even to life itself, comes. Then his character will show itself, and men will call him by his true name—A Hero.

❦

MY IDEAL WOMAN.

MY ideal woman must be very human. She must not be an angel—at any rate, not at present. She must possess the truest beauty, and that which is the most difficult of attainment, the beauty of intelligence. Beauty of face or form is incidental, not necessary to her ideality. But the two most important characteristics of my ideal woman are, sympathy and the power to love deeply. This latter, indeed, comprises all that is most desirable. "Love covereth a multitude of sins." For a woman, who, while aiming at a high standard herself, yet recognises, nay, even sympathises with, the peccability of others, is a possession to be "valued above rubies." And if any misanthropic scoffer should doubt her existence he is to be pitied for his ignorance. For I have seen her.

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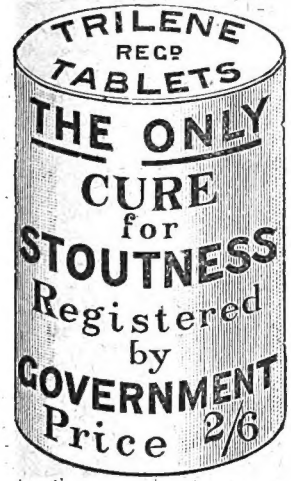
Can be CURED by taking

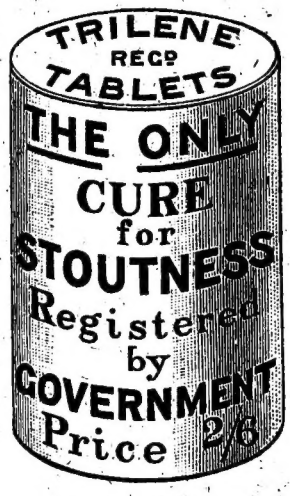
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

Miss CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Miss NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved it they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

Mrs. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

Mr. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mrs E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 40 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATIENT, of Woodberry, Theydon Bois: "Feel great benefit from Tablets. I have lost 2st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since. Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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Dr. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., &c.

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Cocoa.

300 GOLD MEDALS, ETC.

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WILL SUIT YOU DOWN TO THE GROUND.

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THE OXYCENISED NATURAL WATER.

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ICILMA SOAP MADE WITH ICILMA WATER.

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Of all Chemists or from Barclay & Sons Ltd., 95 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

A FREE TRIAL FOR 2/6

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Price £1 10s. 0d.

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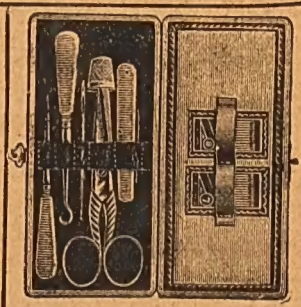
You send us **2/6**, with your Name and Address, and we will send one on approval.

If you approve of it you send us **2/6** on receipt and **5/-** each month for 5 months, making the full **30/-**.

BUT OUR NETT CASH WITH ORDER PRICE IS **27/-** only.

And if you do not approve of the Outfit, we will refund the cash sent, if you return the Outfit at once.



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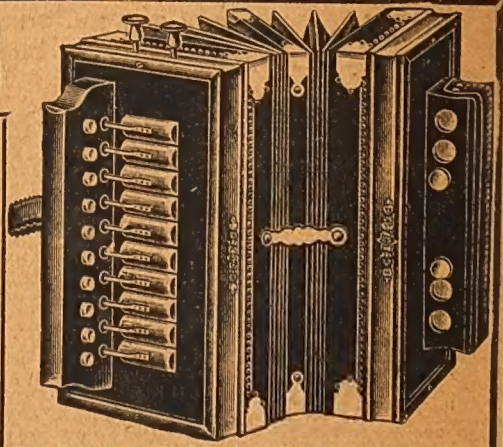

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We will supply any reader with this Melodeon on receipt of **2/6**. If you approve of it you send us **2/-** on receipt and **2/-** each month for 4 months. Nett Cash With Order Price **11/-** only. If you do not approve of it we will refund the cash if you return the Melodeon at once.

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